

**Fictional Displacements:
An Analysis of Three Texts by Orhan Pamuk**

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I, Hande Gurses confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

To my parents
Didem & Haluk Gurses

Abstract

This study aims to discuss the structural and contextual configuration of three books by Orhan Pamuk: *The White Castle*, *My Name is Red* and *Istanbul: Memories of a City*. The central line of enquiry will be the possibility of representing identity as the attempt to capture the elements that make the 'self' what it is. Without limiting my analysis to an individual or national definition of identity, I will argue that Pamuk, writing through the various metaphysical binaries including self/other, East/West, word/image, reality/fiction, and original/imitation, offers an alternative view of identity resulting from the definition of representation as *différance*. I will argue that within the framework of Pamuk's work representation, far from offering a comforting resolution, is a space governed by ambivalence that results from the fluctuations of meaning. Representation, for Pamuk, is only possible as a process of constant displacement that enables meaning through difference and deferral. Accordingly the representation of identity is no longer limited to the binaries of the metaphysical tradition, which operate within firm boundaries, but manifests itself in constant fluctuation as ambivalence. Within this framework I will suggest that Pamuk's works operate in that space of ambivalence, undermining the firm grounds of metaphysics by perpetually displacing any possibility of closure. Initially focusing on the self/other dichotomy I will argue that the representations of the 'self' are its reinventions through difference and deferral thus representing it as 'an-other'. Using the theoretical framework offered by the writings of Jacques Derrida I will

study the various textual and stylistic strategies that Pamuk uses in the his books to enable the representation of identity as *différance*.

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I. Introduction

‘The art of the novel is the knack of being able to speak about ourselves as if we were another person, and about others as if we were in their shoes.’ (Pamuk, 2010: 71)

‘The possibilities and powers of displacement are extremely diverse in nature, and, rather than enumerating here all their titles, let us attempt to produce some of their effects as we go along, as we continue our march...’ (Derrida, 2004: 99)

The autobiographical sources of this study could be dated back to 2005 when I first moved to London to pursue my postgraduate studies. It was with that physical displacement from Istanbul to London that I came to realize the complexities involved in what I until then believed to be easily accessible: my ‘self’. My move to London offered me an unprecedented experience by depriving me of the pre-existing paradigms, which until then kept me safely within the boundaries of a certain definition of my ‘self’.

Not only was I deprived of the signs that constituted a major part of the representation of my ‘self’ but also indications that I believed to be immanent to my ‘self’ had quickly vanished. The simple act of introducing myself had all of a sudden become an elaborate process that left me not only puzzled but also frustrated for not being able to represent my ‘self’ properly. As is customary, I would introduce myself by initially telling my name, ‘Hande’¹ which most of the time was received with an expression of confusion. Often it was the first time my interlocutor was being exposed to such a combination of letters and I was compelled to spell the letters and repeat the correct pronunciation to make it more

¹ The word *hande* is Persian in origin and means ‘smile’ or ‘laughter’. It is a very common female name in Turkish, though few people are aware of its meaning in the original Persian.

comprehensible. Rather than providing an explanation regarding my 'self', my name would generate an obscure first impression leading to the inevitable question: 'Where are you from?'

This enquiry, unlike the name, sought to obtain clarification regarding the geographical positioning of the person in question. My response, 'Turkey', however, revealed that the scope of the question wasn't limited to the geographical boundaries but contributed to the formation of an impression that was charged with cultural, political and religious assumptions. These assumptions became evident with the comment that followed my response: 'You don't look Turkish.' While the preconceived ideas concerning the looks of women from Turkey are irrelevant to the purpose of this study, it is important to note that my country of origin, just like my name, far from providing an 'accurate' representation of my 'self', resulted in further complications. As an alternative response I would occasionally resort to 'Istanbul' to define my 'origin', which most of the time was received with more enthusiasm.

While on the one hand these occurrences forced me to find alternative attributes that would offer a better representation of my 'self', on the other they led me to call into question the definition of that 'self' that needed to be represented. What exactly was that 'thing' that 'I' referred to? Did it have a substance? Was it restricted to my material existence? Was it ever possible to capture its dynamic constitution? My inability to come up with a definition coincided with my re-discovery of Orhan Pamuk, whose work I was already familiar with, but had a chance to read under a new light in London as the inability to define a 'self' became a personal experience. In this study I will analyse three books by Orhan Pamuk, *The White Castle*, *My Name is Red* and

Istanbul: Memories of a City, using mainly the theoretical framework offered by the writings of Jacques Derrida. Focusing primarily on the problematization of the ‘self’, I will discuss Pamuk’s outlook on the metaphysical tradition of defining identity. I will study how Pamuk’s evaluation of the problematic definitions of the pairs self/other, East/West, real/fictional, modern/traditional, original/copy, far from aiming at a reversal of these hierarchies offers an alternative perspective deprived of the primacy of the ‘origin’. Before discussing the implications of displacement in Pamuk’s oeuvre and outlining the theoretical framework for this study I shall cite some biographical information on Orhan Pamuk and offer a brief overview of his writings in a chronological order.

Ferit Orhan Pamuk, the 2006 Nobel laureate for literature, was born in 1952 in Istanbul. He and his family lived in the Westernized district of Nişantaşı, which figures in many of his novels. Pamuk’s grandfather was a civil engineer who made his fortune building railways during the early years of the Republic. After attending Robert College² Pamuk studied architecture at Istanbul Technical University. At the end of his third year Pamuk abandoned his studies, deciding that ‘they would never let me make the sorts of buildings I wanted in those streets. But they would not object if I shut myself up in my own house and wrote about them’ (Pamuk, 2007: 308). Hence, at the age of 22, he decided to become a writer. Pamuk then graduated in journalism from Istanbul University but never practised journalism.

In 1982 Pamuk published his first novel, *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları*,³ and won the Orhan Kemal and Milliyet literary awards. The novel tells the story of

² Established in 1863, Robert College is one of the most selective, private high schools of Turkey.

³ This novel is not translated into English. The title could be translated as ‘Cevdet Bey and Sons’.

three generations of the Işıklı⁴ family from the early 1900s till the 1970s. Following a chronological line the novel portrays the effects of modernisation on the different generations of the Işıklı family. His second novel, *Silent House* (1983),⁵ set in contemporary Turkey tells the story of the grandchildren of the late Selahattin Darvinoğlu.⁶ When Nilgün, Faruk and Metin visit their grandmother for the anniversary of their grandfather's death they also uncover some unpleasant family secrets. The polyphonic narrative style used in *Silent House* allows the reader to hear the individual voices of each character, who tell the events from their individual perspectives. In 1985 Pamuk published *The White Castle* his first novel to be translated into English, which will be discussed in detail in the first chapter of this study. Set in seventeenth century Istanbul, *The White Castle* tells the story of the identical looking Ottoman Hoja and his Venetian slave. *The White Castle* with its different diegetic levels and the ambiguous ending marks a shift in Pamuk's oeuvre. It could be argued that with this text, Pamuk abandons the conventions of the realist novel that were evident in his first two narratives and starts exploring less familiar grounds by trying different techniques and themes. In *The Black Book* (1990) Pamuk portrays the non-linear journey of the protagonist Galip who wakes up one day to find his wife Rüya⁷ missing. Galip's quest for his wife in Istanbul turns the city into a text that is waiting to be deciphered. *The New Life* (1994), similar to *The Black Book*, depicts an expedition. This time the protagonist sets on a journey in Anatolia getting on and off buses, looking to unravel the secret of the book that changed his life. Both *The*

⁴ *Işıklı* meaning 'lighter' or 'light giver' is the surname that Cevdet Bey chooses when the law on surnames passes. It alludes to the novel's original title 'Light and Darkness'.

⁵ The novel is published in French in 1988 as *La Maison du Silence*. The English translation will be released in the fall of 2012.

⁶ Darvinoğlu literally means 'son of Darwin' echoing the grandfather's obsession with science and the creation of an encyclopedia.

⁷ *Rüya* means 'dream' in Turkish and is also the name of Pamuk's daughter.

Black Book and *The New Life* are characterized by the non-linear journeys of their protagonists, which far from leading to a conclusive solution culminate in further ambiguity.

In 1998 Pamuk publishes *My Name is Red*, which I will analyse in detail in the second chapter of this study. Set in sixteenth century Istanbul the novel depicts the controversies that centre around the creation of a book made with Western style paintings. *Other Colours* (1999) is a collection of essays where Pamuk addresses various themes including writing, literature, love, identity, Istanbul and politics. In 2002, with *Snow* Pamuk ventures outside Istanbul and sets his narrative in the eastern province of Kars. *Snow* addresses contemporary conflicts represented by the Islamists and the more secular members of the military through a fictional coup that takes place during the days that the city is cut off from the world due to heavy snow. *Istanbul: Memories of a City* (2003), which I will discuss in the third chapter of this study, is a multi-levelled narrative that portrays the first twenty-two years of Orhan's life in parallel with the city of Istanbul. Composed of micro-essays the narrative explores the possibilities of a definition of the 'self'.

In 2005 Pamuk's words, not from his novels, but from an interview he gave to a Swedish magazine, occupied the headlines of numerous national newspapers. In the controversial interview, Pamuk stated that in the early nineteenth century there had been systematic killings of many Kurdish and Armenian citizens and that this issue has since then remained a taboo in Turkey.

In February 2005, in an interview published in a Swiss newspaper, I said that a million Armenians and thirty thousand Kurds had been killed in Turkey; I went on to complain that it was taboo to discuss these matters in my country. (Pamuk, 2007: 237)

The outrage that these words caused in the Turkish media was also supported by Turkish state prosecutors who charged Pamuk with ‘insulting Turkishness’. Initially Pamuk had to flee the country because of the growing hate campaign against him, but gradually with the pressure of various international organizations including Amnesty International and PEN he was able to return and the charges were dropped eventually.

When in 2006 Pamuk received the Nobel Prize for Literature, as was expected, many of his fellow countrymen were rather unhappy. Many Turkish people believed – and today still believe – that Pamuk won the award not for his literary merit but because of his statements regarding the Kurds and the Armenians. The academy, however, underlined Pamuk’s value as a novelist and stated that he ‘in the quest for the melancholic soul of his native city has discovered new symbols for the clash and interlacing of cultures’ (nobelprize.org).

In 2008 Pamuk published his latest novel *The Museum of Innocence*, translated into English in 2009. Set in the Istanbul of the 1970s, the novel depicts the hopeless love affair between Kemal and his distant cousin Füsün. In portraying this passionate and doomed relationship between Füsün and Kemal, Pamuk also raises questions regarding sexuality, love and happiness in a society where traditional values are in conflict with the modern desires. The novel is constructed with the various objects that Kemal collects throughout his relationship with Füsün. Objects Pamuk presumably drew on to write his text, ranging from cigarette butts to hair clips, from quince grinders to keys, are exhibited in the actual Museum of Innocence⁸ that opened on April 28, 2012. A

⁸ For more information on the museum: www.masumiyetmuzesi.org

catalogue of the museum that contains essays by Pamuk is published under the title *Şeylerin Masumiyeti* (2012).⁹

Two non-fictional books that followed are *Manzaradan Parçalar: Hayat, Sokaklar, Edebiyat*¹⁰ (2010), a collection of essays, and *The Naïve and The Sentimental Novelist* (2010), Charles Eliot Norton lectures that Pamuk gave at the Harvard University where he discusses the art of the novel and addresses the primary questions that arise during the process of writing. Pamuk's forthcoming novel, provisionally entitled 'Kafamda Bir Tuhaflık'¹¹ is about the struggles of a street vendor in Istanbul.

How is then displacement relevant to Pamuk's oeuvre? The development of the word displacement could be traced back to its use in psychoanalysis with Freud. Its emergence on the radar of contemporary criticism, however, requires a distinction to be made between the two kinds of displacement that appear in Freud's work. Spivak explains the distinction as follows:

Freud's displacement of the subject should not be confused with Freud's notion of displacement (*Verschiebung*) in the dream-work, which is one of the techniques of the dream-work to transcribe the latent content of the dream to its manifest content. The displacement of the subject that is the theme of deconstruction relates rather to the dream-work in general; for the dream *as a whole* displaces the text of the latent content into the text of the manifest content. Freud calls this *Entstellung* (literally 'displacement'; more usually translated as 'distortion'). (Spivak, 1987: 172)

Within the framework of deconstruction, the word 'displacement' puts emphasis on the textual composition of the subject and the perpetual movement of

⁹ The catalogue will be published under the title 'The Innocence of Objects' in the fall of 2012. The title of the catalogue is highly indicative as it in a way summarizes the whole project as both the novel and the museum are created with insignificant 'innocent' objects that are assigned meaning to by Kemal.

¹⁰ This collection 'Fragments of the Landscape: Life, Streets, Literature' is yet not translated into English

¹¹ The title could be translated as 'A Strangeness in my Mind'. The publication date remains unannounced.

intertextuality. It does not refer to a one-way process that aims to make intelligible what was originally encrypted but rather defines a permanent movement of dissemination without establishing a primary origin. Peggy Kamuf focusing on the literal meaning of the word underlines the movement that is at work in displacement:

One is thus reminded that *déplacement*, *déplacer* indicate as well, and even first of all, the most basic sense of movement, whether in space, time, or elsewhere. To move or shift something from one place to another or to change an appointment is to *le déplacer*. To be *en déplacement* is to be on a trip, away from home. And *se déplacer* is to put oneself in motion to change places or locations, which one can do in some mode of transport, that is, a *moyen de déplacement*. But as well, for example a remark that is out of place, as we say, inappropriate, is said to be *déplacée* and to *déplacer* someone can mean to take his place or his job. (Kamuf, 2006: 883)

What needs to be highlighted is the fact that the *déplacement* does not connote a movement between two fixed points of origin. It does not refer to a predetermined itinerary amongst predictable points. For Derridean deconstruction, displacement marks the dissolution of an originary ‘home’ from which the movement would be initiated. Displacement as deconstruction contends, is without a ‘home’; it does not introduce movement to a fixed point but rather is always and already at work. It does not connote a method of reading that aims to dislocate a previously established text but defines the movement that is always already at work in the writing of the text.

Displacement, then, would be the very movement or gesture of writing/reading, the transfer effected through the space of composing differences, of the play of the other in being. Displacement, movement, but also out-of-placeness, dislocation, without proper place or home, de-placing, the un-doing of place: this is what writes itself, what one must begin by reading, which is to say, by recognizing that one is moving through the space of composing differences. (Kamuf, 2006: 883)

Displacement does not only denote movement but also marks the ‘out-of-placeness’ that prevents the securing of a firm ground. It does not refer to an external effect brought about by reading but rather indicates the movement that is always already at work within writing itself as differences. Both the writing and the reading of the text indicate the possibility of displacement. Within this framework Pamuk’s texts offer an insight into the displacement as ‘dislocation’ as they not only offer a displaced reading of the system within which they operate but also are composed within displacement as difference. Pamuk does not problematize the metaphysical thought to provide an alternative ‘home’ but rather to show the impossibility of a fixed place. Within this framework in order to better analyse the references of Pamuk’s text I will offer a historical contextualization by outlining the development of the Turkish experience of modernity.

A. The Nation in Context

Gerard Delanty traces the origins of the categories of the East and the West¹² back to the eleventh century. According to Delanty the crusades played an important role in shaping a unifying definition of European identity:

The ensuing crusading ideology that emerged became an integral component of the identity of the European. The importance of the crusades is that they shaped the formation of an ethno-culturally homogenising identity, which subsequently became a core component of European identity. (Delanty, 1995: 34)

What was initially based on religious dissimilarity gradually gained cultural, political, social and economic dimensions culminating in the construction of the categories of the East and the West. Following the rise of imperialism in the nineteenth century and the proliferation of travel literature different parts of the world have appeared on the radar of the European explorers culminating in an abundance of representation of the Orient. Edward Said in his acclaimed *Orientalism* analyses the scope of these representations and their effect on the construction of both the Orient and the Occident as two opposing cultural and historical entities. Said notes that these representations led to the emergence of Orientalism, a 'style of thought' (Said, 2003; 2), 'a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient' (Said, 2003; 3). These representations of the Orient not only created a misconception of their subject but also resulted in a hierarchical definition of the two ends of the binary where the West was accorded higher status.

¹² My use of these categorical references does not entail a metaphysical implication but refer to the generic cultural division.

The technological, social and political developments¹³ that marked the emergence of a modern Europe did not occur concurrently in its military adversary, the Ottoman Empire (1299-1923). Following its defeat by the West, notably at Lepanto in 1571 and especially Vienna in 1683, the Ottoman Empire was entering a period of stagnation. Its military and financial struggles were further deepened when with the French Revolution the integrity of the Empire started to be threatened. With the influence of the ideas flowing from the revolution various Balkan nations have declared independence and made apparent the inevitable need for reformatory acts within the Empire. The reforms initiated during the reign of Sultan Mahmud II (1789-1839) resulted in the period known as Tanzimat – ‘Reorganization’ – announced with a decree in 1839.¹⁴ With this decree Sultan Abdülmecid I (1823-1861) aimed to put an end to the nationalist movements within the Ottoman Empire. The decree granted all the Muslim and the non-Muslim peoples of the Empire equality before the law while ensuring their right to a fair trial. The Tanzimat period¹⁵ with the implementation of various cultural and social institutions not only aimed to give the Empire a modern façade but also attempted to alleviate the repercussions of the French Revolution on the *millet*¹⁶ system. The designation of an Ottoman national anthem and a national flag (1844) display the initial endeavours to create an Ottoman

¹³ The Renaissance, the Reformation, the Industrial Revolution and imperialism are among those developments.

¹⁴ This decree is known as ‘the Hatt-ı Şerif of Gülhane’, Imperial Decree of Gülhane.

¹⁵ Carter Vaughn Findley’s article ‘The Tanzimat’ offers a concise overview of the period.

¹⁶ The Ottoman *millet* system was based on religious identity. Judaism, Christianity or Islam constituted the main categories under which the people of the Ottoman Empire were united regardless of their ethnicity or language. The influence of the rising nationalism in Europe made the *millet* system inoperative as various ethnicities started to unite under their respective national identities. According to Feroz Ahmad the *millet* system was not directed at assimilation but rather offered a practical solution to keep the peoples of the Empire peacefully together (Ahmad, 2010: 13).

identity in order to prevent disintegration initiated by the emerging national identities.

The influence of the ideals propagated by the French Revolution was not restricted to the religious and ethnic minorities but also reverberated among the bureaucratic elite of the Empire. A new group known as the Young Ottomans expressed their discontent¹⁷ regarding the financial and political outcomes of the Tanzimat reforms and advocated for the implementation of a constitution. In 1876 with the increasing pressure from the Young Ottomans Sultan Abdülhamid (1842-1918) agreed to a constitutional reign, which lasted for five months. The second constitutional era, however, had a greater momentum with the support of the Young Turks¹⁸ who initiated a revolution, which culminated in the restoration of the constitution and the parliament in 1908. The political unrest and the subsequent reforms inevitably affected the literary productions of the era, resulting in the emergence of the first Turkish novels.¹⁹

Poetry had been the predominant narrative tradition within the Ottoman Empire while prose was mainly restricted to famous epics and romances. The absence of Turkish novels was primarily an effect of the Islamic tradition, which objects to any alternative representations of the world. As Edward Said explains, the Islamic tradition considers the world complete as it already is and the novel is regarded as an attempt to change that order through the alternative representations that it offers.

¹⁷ The financial exemptions offered to the non-Muslim communities made it hard for the Muslim traders to compete on equal terms, forcing them to seek employment in government offices. The limited number of positions available resulted in rising levels of unemployment among the Muslim, which added to the financial distress brought by the military failures. (Ahmad, 2010: 44)

¹⁸ A faction of the Committee of Union and Progress (Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti) which remained in the political arena during the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the foundation of the Turkish Republic. The political stand of the Union and Progress group is centered on a Turkish identity.

¹⁹ Erdağ Göknaar in 'The Novel in Turkish: narrative tradition to Nobel Prize' provides a comprehensive outline of the Turkish novel.

Obviously it is not that simple; nevertheless, it is significant that the desire to create an alternative world, to modify or augment the real world through the act of writing (which is one motive underlying the novelistic tradition in the West) is inimical to the Islamic world-view. The Prophet is he who has *completed* a world-view; thus the word *heresy* in Arabic is synonymous with the verb “to innovate” or ‘to begin’. Islam views the world as a plenum, capable of neither diminishment nor amplification. Consequently, stories like those in *The Arabian Nights* are ornamental, variations on the world, not completions of it; neither are they lessons, structures, extensions, or totalities designed to illustrate either the author’s prowess in representation, the education of a character, or ways in which the world can be viewed and changed. (Said, 1997: 81)²⁰

As the above passage explains, according to the Islamic tradition the world is already in its ideal complete state and consequently there is no place for change or an alternative depiction of the world. The novel, on the other hand, offers a new perception of reality where characters are created in the likeness of human beings, challenging God as the ultimate creator. The work of art, according to the Islamic tradition, seeks not to challenge or question but to portray the beauty of the existing state. The two major streams of literary production within the Ottoman Empire consist of the official Divan tradition and the more popular folk tradition. As Robert P. Finn states, the Divan tradition is divided in itself between prose and poetry. They share common characteristics:

From this tradition come the great romances of Islamic literature, *Leyla and Mejnun*, *Husrev and Şirin* and their like, whose characters exist in a transcendent realm where time and space are vague and irrelevant, where personality is subsumed in the identity of the beloved, and where reality is finally expressed in a metaphysical immanence which obviates reliance upon act and causality... The influence of the Divan tradition lies more in the emphasis on the spiritual nature of the characters, on their psychological states. Authors are concerned with depicting extremes of emotion and intensity of feeling. (Finn, 1984: 2)

²⁰ It is important to note that the Turkish word for literature, *edebiyat* derives from the Arabic *adab*, which means ‘good manners, culture, upbringing’. Thus even the contemporary use of the word has a didactic undertone, suggesting instruction rather than controversy or provocation.

While the rules of the Divan tradition are fairly specified, the more popular narrative styles offer a wider variety both in form and content. These popular narratives:

are either heroic, romantic, or a combination of both, and depict in lively narrative the deeds of epic heroes, as in *Dedem Korkud'un Kitabı*, the tales of Köroğlu and his band, or the widespread humorous tales of Nasreddin Hoca... Action, in these early works is direct and physical. Reflection, emotive and psychological nuance and inference are either absent or present as events estranged from the main course of action. (Finn, 1984: 3)

Alongside the written narratives, the oral tradition played an important role in Ottoman literary history. Among the oral performers the *meddah*²¹ deserves a special place as the precursor of the modern novelist. As Evin notes, the *meddah* performed 'publicly and privately on the street, in coffeehouses, in the mansions of the notables, and at the palace, broke the barriers of class and estate in providing the same type of entertainment to all.' (Evin, 1983: 30) This diversity was also reflected in the narrative style of the *meddah* that combined:

the formality and elegance of the upper class parlance with the informality of conversational Turkish, but which nevertheless captured the refinements of the language as spoken in Istanbul. This style provided a lively and infinitely more adoptable model for the early novelist than the formal Ottoman prose. (Evin, 1983: 30)

The reformists of the Tanzimat era while on the one hand introducing the ideals of the Western world, on the other were growing more and more critical towards 'traditional' institutions. Literary production was one such area where the traditional genres were no longer considered fit to convey the ideas of the reforms. The Ottoman literary tradition was too abstract and too removed from the taste of the general public. As Evin explains:

²¹ The storyteller in *My Name is Red* is an example of the *meddah* tradition.

The main problem with the 'old literature' was that it had never developed rhetorical means to convey ideas, and as such, it stood in the way of dealing with reality. For the reformers, this was morally the most reprehensible aspect of Ottoman literature: a tradition feeding on aloofness from social reality could not be compatible with the notion of progress, and hence, it had to be buried. Because those attacks on the classical tradition were paralleled by equally earnest exhortations on the need to take example from the West, the transformation of Turkish literature from the 1860s onward came to be seen as a process of literary Westernization. (Evin, 1983: 17)

As a result the novel was considered to be among the most adequate literary forms because it not only represented the achievement of the Western heritage but also offered 'means to examine the individual and society in terms of a man's own perception of reality' (Evin, 1983: 18). The French realist novel therefore offered the most adequate example of this perception of reality and the first novel published in the Turkish language is a translation of Abbé Fénelon's *Télémaque* by Yusuf Kamil Paşa in 1862. The first original novel written in Turkish is Şemseddin Sami's *Taaşuk-ı Talat ve Fitnat* (The Love of Talat and Fitnat) in 1872.

Because the introduction of the novel into Ottoman culture was predominantly controlled by the reformist intellectuals, the initial examples of the genre were predominantly formed by their priorities. According to Ahmet Ö. Evin the three main concerns of these intellectuals were: 'to disseminate their ideas among a wider audience, to attract the attention of the public to current issues, and to borrow from Europe those institutions which were deemed worth of being adopted.' (Evin, 1983: 18) As a result of these objectives the novel genre became more of a propaganda than a form of artistic expression. The immediate connection that the realist novel established with the world proved a very rich resource for the reforming intellectuals of the Tanizmat era who wanted to communicate their ideas to a wider public.

The novel could this be an advantageous vehicle through which ideas could be transmitted to wider audiences in popularized form. The enormous possibilities that the novel afforded as a didactic medium were most appealing to the idealism of the post-Tanzimat generation of idealists. So strong, in fact, was this appeal in Turkey that many writers of subsequent generations would also employ fiction chiefly to espouse social and political ideas, and as a consequence, a tiresome streak of didacticism continued to plague the Turkish novel for many years to come. (Evin, 1983: 18)

If didacticism is the main characteristic of the early Turkish novel, what exactly was the message that needed to be communicated to a wider audience? While celebrating the achievements of the Western civilization, the novels also promoted a similar transition process for Ottoman citizens to emerge as members of a modern state. The praise that was accorded to the Western modernity was limited in so far as it was portrayed as a reference point for the Islamic culture.

Once more must be noted the consistent themes of the Tanzimat intellectuals: the cohesiveness of the body politic (at the roots of Turkish nationalism to emerge later was this transition from Islamic community to modern citizenry), the role of education in achieving progress, and the proven superiority of Europe in these two respects. The novels of what may be called the didacticist-realist movement between 1875 and 1893 as exemplified by the work of Ahmet Mithat would consist of interpolations of these themes as well as the contrapuntal theme of the moral superiority of Islam as compared to the depravity of Christian Europe. (Evin, 1983: 47)

The didactic tone of the Tanzimat era novel is to a great extent obtained with the educative voice of the author. As Jale Parla in her comprehensive book on the Tanzimat novel notes, ‘the didactic and interpretive voice of the author in the Tanzimat novel is always interfering with the narrative’ (Parla, 2009: 62, *my translation*). Comparing the presence of the author within the narrative to the *meddah* tradition, Parla argues that the presence of the voice of the author was the inevitable result of the epistemological foundations of the Tanzimat era. Parla contends that the reforms challenged the authority that until then secured the

absolutist epistemological foundations of Ottoman cultural norms. These cultural norms, according to Parla, are outlined by the ‘indisputability of the Koran, the supremacy of Aristotelian logics, a firm separation of the good from the bad, an abstract idealism induced by traditional mysticism and the implementation of sharia law’ (Parla, 2009: 15, *my translation*). Thus the reforms not only limited the authority of the sultan but also left this essential foundation of the Ottoman cultural norms subject to the threat of Western influence. According to Parla, in order to protect the essential epistemological foundation, which she compares to an orphan, the novelist needed to adopt the role of a protective ‘father’. It is the voice of this ‘authoritative father figure’ that is heard in the Tanzimat era novel which Parla claims was more similar to allegory than to the novel genre. As a result of the novelists’ firm commitment to the essential value system, the novels rather than portraying alternative ‘realities’ proposed allegories that enabled the affirmation and protection of existing Ottoman values.

Truth is universal, naked, absolute, unique and unchangeable. It is the same for everyone and everyone needs to accept it that way. But at times truth may be hard to accept or understood. And that is why it needs to be told using elements from fairytales. The novelist is both the commentator and the adorer of truth. Novels depicting such unquestionable and absolute realities need to use allegory. Allegory is the axis upon which, at least in the beginning, the Eastern novel is built. (Parla, 2009: 63, *my translation*)

Consequently the Tanzimat era novel emerges as allegories of the same essential Islamic foundation that needs to be protected by the ‘fatherly’ figure represented by the authoritative voice of the author. The ‘father’ figure that eventually emerges is one who eliminates all the Ottoman cultural values that the Tanzimat era novelists were trying to preserve: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

Despite the political, military and cultural reformations implemented during the latter half of the nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire could not

prevent its eventual collapse following the First World War. While the victors were making headway with the partition of the land that the sultan had agreed with, a new group of nationalists were fighting the War of Independence (1919-1923) under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal. ‘Denounced by the caliph sultan as heretics and outlaws, the nationalists waged a successful war of liberation, elected a new parliament based in Ankara, abolished the sultanate, and declared the Republic of Turkey on 29 October 1923.’ (Seyhan, 2008: 26)

The shift from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic was not an instant move but required some theoretical and practical endeavour. For Mustafa Kemal the only possible way to establish the Turkish nation-state was the severing of all ties with the Ottoman past. The Empire that had during its final years become the ‘sick man of Europe’ needed now to be buried in order to allow the birth of a new state. Despite Mustafa Kemal’s fierce attempts, however, the Ottoman heritage continued and still continues to haunt the Turkish consciousness.

In his attempt to construct a modern state Mustafa Kemal looked to the Western example and adopted the cultural and political institutions that, according to him, brought about a modern state. After the military war that brought him victory, Mustafa Kemal initiated a cultural and political war, the ‘Turkish Revolution’.

The reforms that took place during this period were wide-ranging. Right after the proclamation of the Turkish Republic, the capital was moved from Istanbul to Ankara not merely for geopolitical purposes but also in an attempt to initiate a new and fresh start. In 1926 the civil code that allowed women with equal rights was accepted; in 1930 women were given the right to vote in local

elections and in 1934 women were given full electoral rights. Unlike the reformers of the Tanzimat era, Mustafa Kemal wasn't interested in the protection of an essential foundation. On the contrary everything relating to Islam was for him indicative of the Ottoman heritage that needed to be eliminated to make room for the new and modern Turkish state. For this purpose he abolished the caliphate in 1924 and the Ottoman royalty was exiled. In 1925 the 'Hat Law' was passed which banned the traditional garment 'fez' and instead promoted the use of modern hats. The convents and dervish lodges where the teaching of Islam was conducted were closed down. In 1928 the article that stated the religion of the state as Islam was removed from the constitution. In 1934 the 'Surname Law' was passed which enforced the use of a surname while banning the use of the Ottoman titles such as 'pasha' or 'bey'; the parliament accorded Mustafa Kemal the surname 'Atatürk'.²²

In 1928 one of the most visible signs that connected the Turkish nation to the Ottoman and Muslim past, the Arabic script, was eliminated with the law that introduced the use of the Roman alphabet. This decisive shift that Derrida very accurately terms '*coup de la lettre*' (Derrida & Malabou, 2004: 11) while cutting all ties with the Ottoman past, left the citizens of the newly found Turkish Republic illiterate. 'According to a 1927 census, less than nine percent of the population was literate' (Seyhan, 2008: 37) and with the changing of the alphabet Atatürk aimed to obtain a higher level of literacy; he personally 'went around the country teaching the new alphabet, on which he had worked with a committee of linguists.' (Seyhan, 2008: 37) Notwithstanding the progressive aim, violence was an inherent aspect of this reform which deprived people of their past. 'A widely

²² The compound is created with 'ata' and 'Türk' meaning the 'originary Turk' or the 'head of the Turk'. The surname marks Mustafa Kemal as the founding figure of the Turkish nation thus according him the role the 'father'.

known anecdote recounts the distress of a noted intellectual who commented that the populace would not be able to read the writings on the tombstones.’ (Seyhan, 2008: 37) Pamuk addresses this change in his writings as it not only reflects an important moment in collective memory but also illustrates the impossibility of securing meaning through legibility. As we shall see, Pamuk uses it to challenge the position of writing as the supplement of speech since it illustrates how writing cannot be defined in terms of presence or absence. The illegible texts become symbols of the absence of an inherent originary meaning. The illegible symbols of the Arabic script thus emerge as forms that produce meaning.

In order to alleviate the effect of these reforms on the daily lives of the people, Atatürk established People’s Houses all around Anatolia to teach the elderly how to read and write and to provide training in arts and sports for younger citizens. For Atatürk the modernity project was not complete without the arts and for this purpose various students were funded to study in European institutions and the State Art and Sculpture Museum opened in 1927.

Having eliminated all traces of an Islamic foundation, the new Republic was forced to find an alternative *genesis* for the newly found Turkish Republic. Deprived of the Ottoman cultural and political heritage, the nation was in need of a new foundation that would operate as its ‘essence’. For this purpose Atatürk established the Turkish Language Association (1932) and the Turkish History Society (1931). Both institutions worked to construct a Turkish identity; the Language Association’s objective was to replace all the words that had Arabic or Persian origin with Turkish ones, while also trying to establish a linguistic theory that would trace the origin of the Turkish language. In a similar vein the History

Society aimed to construct a narrative that would provide the new nation with a genesis story.²³

For Atatürk the modernization of the Turkish nation was only possible by following the Western example. The Western nations represented a 'higher level of civilization' that the Turkish Republic needed to aspire to in order to become a modern state like its European counterparts. Thus not only modernization became synonymous with westernization but also the Turkish experience of modernity was defined in oppositional terms, the superior part being accorded to the Western counterpart.

Meltem Ahıska in her analysis of the definitions of modernity in non-Western contexts notes this binary foundation, which is given a temporal and spatial dimension through distinct metaphors:

Turkey, which has been labeled by both outsiders and insiders as a bridge between the East and the West, has an ambivalent relation not only to the geographical sites of the East and the West but also to their temporal signification: namely, backwardness and progress. Turkey has been trying to cross the bridge between the East and the West for more than a hundred years now with a self-conscious anxiety that it is arrested in time and space by the bridge itself. In other words, the meaning of the present has a mythical core that has persisted over years and which remains a source of frustration and threat, and as a symptom of internalized inferiority. (Ahıska, 2003: 353)

The equation of Western modernity with the 'present' condemns all non-Western experiences of modernity as 'always already late', resulting in an insurmountable 'time lag' that is characteristic of not only the Turkish but all non-Western experiences of modernity (Ahıska, 2003: 354). For Ahıska the time lag is not one that can be overcome but rather is concomitant with the Western progress: 'The "time lag" is paradoxically immobile and stands apart from the constantly

²³ Murat Belge's 'Essentialism' in *Balkan Literatures in the Era of Nationalism* offers a thorough analysis of the texts that shaped the formation of 'Turkish essentialism'.

onward-moving chronological sequence of Western progress. It is a timeless element of the self-definitions of the non-Western.’ (Ahiska, 2003: 354)

The experience of modernity as the supremacy of presence is called into question by various postcolonial theories. While Turkey has never been a colony, the implementations of the modernizing reforms mimic a colonial experience. As Erdağ Göknaç notes ‘Turkey has never been a colony of the West; nevertheless Atatürk’s cultural revolution through its desire to identify with Western others/attackers openly aimed to ‘civilize’ and ‘modernize’.’ (Göknaç, 2006; 118, *my translation*) The various reforms that took place during the early years of the Turkish Republic followed a Western example and aimed to reproduce a Western lifestyle. For this purpose the reformers disregarded the prevailing cultural and social codes and consequently the changes that took place had a direct and violent effect on people’s everyday experiences. Like the changing of the alphabet, the reforms were implemented from above and not demanded and carried out by the general public. The reforming elite deemed the example set by the Western counterparts to be synonymous with modernity and therefore strived to achieve that exemplary modernity. Within this framework, Homi Bhabha’s definition of modernity is significant in its problematization of the presence/modernity equation.

Bhabha’s argument mainly derives from Derrida’s theoretical framework that calls into question the primacy of meaning as presence, an assumption that lies at the centre of Western metaphysics. Introducing *différance*, which refers to the differing and the deferral that is at work in all instances of signification, Derrida argues that the ‘present’ is always and already composed of the marks of the past and the future:

It is because of *différance* that the movement of signification is possible only if each so-called ‘present’ element, each element appearing on the scene of presence, is related to something other than itself, thereby keeping within itself the mark of the past element, and already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its relation to the future element, this trace being related no less to what is called the future than to what it called the past, and constituting what is called the present by means of this very relation to what it is not: what it absolutely is not, not even a past or a future in a modified present. An interval must separate the present from what it is not in order for the present to be itself, but this interval that constitutes it as present must, by the same token, divide the present in and of itself, thereby also dividing, along with the present, everything that is thought on the basis of the present, that is, in our metaphysical language, every being, and singularly substance or the subject. In constituting itself, in dividing itself dynamically, this interval is what might be called *spacing*, the becoming-space of time or the becoming-time of space (*temporization*). And it is this constitution of the present, as an “originary” and irreducibly nonsimple (and therefore, *stricto sensu* nonoriginary) synthesis of marks, or traces of retentions and protensions (to reproduce analogically and provisionally a phenomenological and transcendental language that soon will reveal itself to be inadequate), that I propose to call archi-writing, archi-trace, or *différance*. (Derrida, 1984: 13)

Thus presence is no longer the pure and originary source from which its ‘others’ derive but is always already constituted by difference and repetition. *Différance* troubles the definition of presence as an intact totality by unravelling its multiple and fragmented constitution. Within this framework, signification as representation can no longer be defined based on the presence/absence dichotomy as all representation becomes possible as *différance*. Meaning is not the inherent originary presence of a signified but rather is created through the constant deferral and difference of signs.

the signified concept is never present in and of itself, in a sufficient presence that would refer only to itself. Essentially and lawfully, every concept is inscribed in a chain or in a system within which it refers to the other, to other concepts, by means of the systematic play of differences. Such a play, *différance*, is thus no longer simply a concept, but rather the possibility of conceptuality, of a conceptual process and system in general. (Derrida, 1984: 11)

Derrida does not merely reverse the binary definitions established by the Western metaphysical tradition; he shatters the foundation on which they are based all together. Within this framework the definition of modernity in terms of the primacy of presence thus proves problematic. As Bhabha illustrates, the experience of modernity cannot be defined as the originary and homogenous source of presence but rather is assigned meaning through a play of differences. Because modernity as a sign does not refer to an originary presence but gains distinct meanings as being part of a system of differences:

Modernity as a *sign* of the present emerges in that process of splitting, that *lag*, that gives the practice of everyday life its consistency as *being contemporary*. It is because the present has the value of a 'sign' that modernity is iterative... (Bhabha, 2010: 348)

Thus rather than representing a unique event that is equated with presence, modernity, as Bhabha defines it, is a sign that is at work within the play of difference. Its meaning is not inherent but one that is constantly subject to modification through the 'time-lag' that the non-Western experience introduces.

The power of postcolonial translation of modernity rests in its *performative, deformative* structure that does not simply revalue the contents of a cultural tradition, or transpose values 'cross-culturally'. The cultural inheritance of slavery or colonialism is brought *before* modernity *not* to resolve its historic differences into a new totality, nor to forego its traditions. It is to introduce another locus of inscription and intervention, another hybrid, 'inappropriate' enunciative site, through that temporal split – or time-lag – that I have opened up... for the signification of postcolonial agency. (Bhabha, 2010: 346)

The experience of modernity within the context of the early Turkish Republic is based on the metaphysical foundations in the sense that it is perceived as the sign of an essential and inherent meaning. Modernity does not merely symbolize the political and cultural institutions of European nations but viewed from the metaphysical perspective reflects the binary pairs of self/other and

presence/absence. Having separated from its Ottoman past, the new Turkish nation was in need of a new form of identification in order to construct its Turkish identity. Modernity thus presented a possibility to obtain a definition of an originary 'self' based on its equation with the 'self' as defined in opposition to the 'other'. It is for this purpose that the newly found Turkish Republic aimed to identify with the idea of the 'self', as is offered by the Western experience of modernity.

The identification process as defined in Lacanian psychoanalysis determines the mirror stage as the period during which the child becomes familiar with his mirror image. During the mirror stage the child, still unable to have full control over his body recognizes his mirror image, which presents an image of ideal unity. The mirror image, unlike the uncoordinated body of the child represents a totality, which is both similar and yet distinct at the same time.

The *mirror stage* is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation – and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic – and lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development. (Lacan, 2006: 5)

For the process of Turkish identity formation, Western modernity represents the ideal mirror image with which it needs to identify. The main problem here does not merely derive from the misconstruction of Western modernity as the source of an 'originary meaning' but also stems from the complications the identification process poses. As Stuart Hall notes:

the discursive approach sees identification as a construction, a process never completed – always 'in process'. It is not determined in the sense that it can always be 'won' or 'lost', sustained or abandoned. Though not without its determinate conditions of existence, including the material and symbolic resources required to sustain it,

identification is in the end conditional, lodged in contingency. Once secured, it does not obliterate difference. The total merging it suggests is, in fact, a fantasy of incorporation... Identification is, then, a process of articulation, a suturing, an over-determination not a subsumption. There is always 'too much' or 'too little' – an over-determination or a lack, but never a proper bit, a totality. (Hall, 1996: 2)

Thus the ideal correspondence through identification is a fantasy, one that has played a significant role in the Turkish experience of modernity. The construction of a Turkish identity is thus based on the fantasy of identification with the ideal image that Western modernity represented.

The fantasy of identity as originary presence is addressed in the writings of Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924) who strove to construct a Turkish identity based on the ideal image set by the Western counterparts. The homogenous definition of Turkish identity as suggested by Gökalp, is indicative of a fantasy of 'presence' as symbolized by Western modernity. Gökalp, 'arguably the most prominent champion of Turkish nationalism' (Seyhan, 2008: 35), constructed an ideal image of Turkish identity using the pre-Ottoman heritage as his foundation in order to establish it as the ideal 'presence'. As Mani notes, the 'Turkishness' that Gökalp delineates is dominated by a metaphysical perspective that prioritizes a singular and homogenous definition of the 'self' reminiscent of the equation of Western modernity with 'presence'.

The text of the nation is a monochrome, rigidly defined, and framed text, with little room for rags, shreds, and pieces from the outside. Gökalp's choice to relinquish multinational influences that altered the 'souls of the Ottomans' over the centuries is a manifest omission of the geographical expanse and the related cultural diversity of the Ottoman Empire. (Mani, 2007: 160)

One of the greatest influences on Pamuk's oeuvre, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962) offers a distinct view for the definition of Turkish identity. Tanpınar,

unlike Gökalp, does not pursue a ‘pure Turkish identity’ in the pre-Ottoman past. Nevertheless, his prioritization of the ‘authentic self’ indicates a metaphysical perspective of the East and the West. An avid follower of Bergson’s ideas, Tanpınar cherished the idea of continuity and he believed in a linear definition of history, composed of a continuity of events. In the case of the Turkish experience, however, this linear continuity was disrupted with the War of Independence and the foundation of the new Turkish Republic. The discontinuity resulted in a state of confusion symptomatic of the Turkish experience: ‘Tanpınar sees modern Turkish culture suffering from a clash of two civilizations, where an Ottoman Islamic past ended up being banned from a narrowly conceived project of modernity.’ (Seyhan, 2008: 137)

The key term for Tanpınar’s oeuvre is the loss that he believed to be characteristic of the ‘Turkish identity’. According to Tanpınar, the ‘authentic self’ of the Ottoman era is lost with the fall of the Empire and the subsequent modernization period. What makes Tanpınar’s work distinctive, however, is his approach towards this loss; without being nostalgic Tanpınar turns this loss into an aesthetic trope from which he can obtain a new ‘authentic self’. In Gürbilek’s words what Tanpınar achieved was to ‘turn the loss of past into a source that feeds art. That is why in Tanpınar the empty space left by the past is more important than the past itself’ (Gürbilek, 2008; 385, *my translation*). Loss for Tanpınar emerges as a source from which he can collect elements in order to construct a new definition of the ‘authentic self’. That ‘authentic self’ is for Tanpınar neither hidden in the lost past nor can be found purely in the Western aspirations; Tanpınar strived to obtain a harmonious combination of both cultures. ‘He called for a “substantial return to our own realities” and to a “personal experience

genuinely ours” and was in search of what he called the “inner man,” an organically composed and genuine cultural self.’ (Gürbilek, 2003: 607) In other words the ideal mirror image is not entirely absent in Tanpınar but is replaced with a new definition of the ‘self’ that is constructed with a harmonious combination of both ends of the East/West binary.

The reforms that drastically changed the Turkish society were not the result of social demand but rather decided and put into practice by the governing elite. The early Turkish novel, echoing the pragmatic intentions of the Tanzimat era, thus served the purpose of propagating the reforms. Halide Edip Adıvar (1884-1964), Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu (1889-1974) and Reşat Nuri Güntekin (1889-1956) are among the early Republican novelists whose work contributed to the construction of a new national identity. These authors have perceived the unexplored land of Anatolia as the source from which they could build a Turkish nation.

For early Republican writers such as Halide Edip Adıvar and Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Anatolia is the virgin land that awaits its deliverance from western imperial powers, its liberation from the yoke of the Ottoman sultan, its emancipation from the clutches of ignorance and backwardness, and its recovery from social and economic injustice. (Parla, 2009b: 402)

Anatolia was an ideal symbol because it was the land where the War of Independence took place, thus was filled with memories of bravery that needed to be addressed. The term ‘Anatolian’ also operated as a neutral name that brought together the ethnically and religiously diverse population of Anatolia, except from any associations with the Ottoman heritage. Anatolia was perceived as a land of hope from which the new nation would flourish. The idealistic portrayal of

Anatolia, however, did not correspond to the reality, as despite the secularist aims of the Republic, religion was still the dominant discourse in Anatolia.

The literary imagination that informed the work of the early Republican authors...foresaw the unfolding of history and a people's destiny in ways that did not agree with their own ideals and dreams for Turkey's future. Therefore they saw it as their responsibility to point out that what had been forcibly removed from view, the entrenched religious sentiments that lay dormant beneath the surface of the fragile new secular institutions, were waiting for an opportunity to strike. The novelistic imagination of the early Republican writers foretells modern Turkey's long and arduous experiment with democracy and the trials of safeguarding the mandates of secularism against the offensive of political Islam. (Seyhan, 2008: 42)

The East/West, self/other binaries that prevailed since the Tanizmat era acquire a new dimension with the foundation of a secular republic. The 'self' of the Turkish nation thus emerges divided between the secular and the Islamist, which is still a valid trope in contemporary Turkey. The tension between these two realms and their subsequent definitions as opponents finds expressions in the military coups that took place in 1960, 1971 and 1980.

The poverty-stricken people of Anatolia remained mostly indifferent to the cultural reforms of the Republic. The aggravated conditions following the Second World War demanded a more politically engaged literature that would hold a 'mirror' to the realities of the Anatolian peasantry, which led to the birth of a specific category known as the 'village novels'. Jale Parla defines the predominant ideology of the village novel as 'left-wing Kemalism, a synthesis of Kemalism, nationalism, socialism and communism' (Parla, 2009b: 408) and cites the novels of Mahmut Makal (1930-), Fakir Baykurt (1929-1999) and Talip Apaydin (1926-) as examples of the 'village novel'. Despite depicting the village, the novels of Yaşar Kemal (1923-) differ from that tradition as they rise above the 'simplistic, populist rhetoric of the Anatolian theme' to convey the 'human

predicament before indifferent nature and unjust social practices.’ (Parla, 2009b: 409)

The stylistic and thematic variety of the Turkish novel only developed in the post-coup period in the 1980s. Erdağ Göknaç argues that it is following the military coup that Turkish literature was released from the ‘grand narratives’ of the nation and started to explore the Ottoman heritage more freely.

Writers of the generation after the last major military coup (September 12, 1980) – which affected all aspects of Turkish politics, society, and culture and broadly represented the transition between leftist-socialist and neoliberal worldviews – have been increasingly free to resurrect Ottoman history and ‘Ottomanesque’ language. In literature, this led to drastic changes as writers responded to the political transformations by moving away from social issues and realism in a manner that questioned grand narratives of nationalism/Kemalism and socialism through aesthetic experimentation with content and form. (Göknaç, 2006a, 35)

The coup ‘...prompted by political violence and growing economic crises’ (Seyhan, 2008: 112) compelled writers to leave the static discourses of the nation and explore alternative representations to the questions raised in times of unrest. The novels of Adalet Ağaoğlu (1929-) explore the effects of these moments of crises on the lives of individuals. Seyhan notes that Ağaoğlu:

is celebrated for her trademark portrayals of individuals whose lives and fortunes are implicated in the web of historical destiny. Because of its philosophically reflective and stylistically appealing nature, her work bears the gift of translatability in more than a linguistic sense. (Seyhan, 2008: 113)

Oğuz Atay (1934-1977) and Bilge Karasu (1930-1995) introduce an ontological perspective to the prevailing question of identity and explore the impact of the experience of modernity vis-à-vis the definition of a cultural identity. Atay explores the impossibility of an ordinary definition of cultural

identity as made explicit in the experience of modernity. According to Suna Ertuğrul:

Atay stages the awakening of the subject through an experience of absolute loss incurred by the death of the other. The subject, by undergoing the unbearable pain of separation/absence, emerges as a response to a call to which it can never fully respond, in regard to which it is always late and always responsible. The birth of the subject, then, would be the breaking down of the economy of the everyday, and the opening up of an impossible responsibility to the other, which will lead to the question of the meaning of Being/world in its turn. (Ertuğrul, 2003: 632)

The writings of Emine Sevgi Özdamar (1946-) offer a distinct perspective on the experience of Turkish cultural identity. A first-generation immigrant to Germany, Özdamar writes in German but also incorporates Turkish words into her text. What makes Özdamar's approach influential is her refusal to remain within a binary position. Her linguistic choices are not symptomatic of a nostalgic desire for origin but rather reflect the uncertainty of the experience of cultural identity. Mani emphasizes the role of memory in her work and how it is explored as the scene of the impossibility of identification:

Özdamar's relationship to Turkish or German national memory, as she reveals certain subaltern pasts, is split and cut off. Allusions to these pasts from national histories of Germany and Turkey, albeit with a studied distance and detachment give us clues to distinguish one global memory from a cosmopolitan memory that remains anchored in multiple national frameworks without a complete identification with and investment in any one of them. This memory word is marked by severance and dislocation from both nations. (Mani, 2007: 117)

Despite the difference in their experiences of dislocation and memory of the nation, both Özdamar and Pamuk offer fragmented narratives indicative of the impossibility of identification. Having outlined the context within which Pamuk's oeuvre operates, I shall now discuss his critical reception.

B. Orhan Pamuk in Context

Despite the absence of a colonial condition the Turkish experience of modernity is primarily shaped by the East/West dichotomy, which also appears as the predominant framework for the critical reception of Pamuk's oeuvre. As Sibel Erol notes, the Swedish Academy's phrasing offers a revealing instance as it summarizes the merit of Pamuk's work:

In presenting the 2006 Nobel Prize for Literature to the Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk, the Swedish Academy commended him for his discovery of 'new symbols for the clash and interlacing of cultures'. The deliberate choice of 'clash' is a coded, evocative way of simultaneously bringing up the now well-worn phrase 'the clash of civilizations' and disavowing it by replacing 'civilizations' with 'cultures'. This is also carefully balanced with the more positive word 'interlacings'. (Erol, 2007: 403)

The metaphysical framework that influences the reception of Pamuk's texts is not limited to the East/West dichotomy but also reverberates through other pairs that include self/other, original/copy, same/different, word/image and real/fictional. While the international reception of Pamuk's works revolves around different interpretations of these binaries, on a national level these binaries acquire local sensitivities shaped by the experience of modernity. As I have sketched in the previous section, modernity as it took place within the Turkish context not only confirmed the superiority of the West and all the adjacent concepts – presence, original, self – but also resulted in a sense of 'internalized inferiority' (Ahiska, 2003: 353). The Turkish experience of modernity assumed the role of always already late in the face of the absolute 'presence' symbolized by the West, resulting in a hierarchical positioning of the two experiences where

the Turkish one was assigned an inferior role. Consequently it wouldn't be entirely inaccurate to claim that the evaluation of Pamuk's merit with Western points of reference – primarily the Nobel Prize – resulted in an 'othering' of Pamuk in Turkey, with accusations claiming that he is writing 'for the West', thus being 'Orientalist'. Laurent Mignon draws attention to the misconceptions that this perspective resulted in:

The fact that this major debate on orientalism in Orhan Pamuk's writings and on the related issue concerning his supposed "writing for the centre" has been misappropriated by the nationalist and conservative intelligentsia in Turkey and used in political polemics against the writer is a rather unfortunate development. (Mignon, 2008: 107)

While condemning the political implications of this misinterpretation, Mignon argues that on a critical level Pamuk's writings do indeed bear traces of Orientalism. Establishing a parallel with Yahya Kemal, who appears as one of the influential authors in Pamuk's experience of Istanbul in *Istanbul: Memories of a City*, Mignon indicates that both authors share an Orientalist perspective based on class:

Indeed in Pamuk's case, just like in Yahya Kemal's, the orientalist outlook has much to do with class, as it was the ruling class that was the motor of westernisation and thus became estranged from ordinary people, their culture and way of life. The question which needs to be asked is whether by looking at and writing about Istanbul like a Westerner, by appropriating orientalism, he is not perpetuating the imagery and ideology that serves even nowadays, at a time when neo-colonialism and 'humanitarian imperialism' are much more than paper tigers in the Near East to legitimise western interventions in the region? (Mignon, 2008: 119)

Focusing on Pamuk's representations of Istanbul in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* and the trope of melancholy that occupies a central position in Pamuk's aesthetics in general, Mignon accuses Pamuk of ignoring the 'factual' causes of melancholy for the sake of a 'romanticised' portrayal of the city:

It is preposterous to claim that there can be a common source of melancholy and grief in a city where in the year 2000, the richest 1 percent of the population controlled 28.97 percent of the wealth, which is equal to the wealth controlled by about 75% of Istanbul. Melancholy, sadness and grief have probably much more concrete causes for working class people, than a romanticised atmosphere of imperial decline and decadence, causes that were not unknown to ordinary people even at the height of Ottoman power. However the poor and the dispossessed have no place in Orhan Pamuk's and Yahya Kemal's portraiture of the city. It is striking that both of them tend to focus on aspects of the city that they consider unique, that most foreign travellers considered so, and chose to ignore the realities of the city that are common to all megapolises, among others the living conditions of the working people. (Mignon, 2008: 115)

Mignon's preoccupation with 'concrete' causes of the melancholy not only restricts his analysis to the confines of the real/fictional boundary but also prevents him from registering the representational value of Pamuk's text. Mignon views Pamuk's fascination with the Westerners' accounts of the city as indicative of his 'Orientalist' gaze as he condemns Pamuk's ignorance of the 'realities' of the city.

Leonard Stone, on the other hand, approaches the issue of Orientalism from a different angle and claims that 'Pamuk is a writer who is engaged with Orientalism rather than an Orientalist himself' (Stone, 2006; 192). The engagement with Orientalism invites various critical perspectives and frees Pamuk from the confines of the metaphysical binaries. Ian Almond, in his analysis of *The Black Book* underlines Pamuk's subverted use of the Orient:

The secular Western hero of the text—a comfortably middle-class Istanbul lawyer—moves deeper and deeper into the book's Orient and its various hurufisms and messianisms, not to find his identity but ultimately to lose it. If the whole point of the constructed Orient of nineteenth century fiction was to give the non-Easterner (and implicitly the nonbeliever, the non-Muslim, the 'Giaour') a self, in *The Black Book* we find this traditional use of the Orient quite subverted. (Almond, 2003; 84)

As Almond argues the modern Western protagonist of the novel is not portrayed from an Orientalist perspective but rather the possibility of defining his identity is perpetually displaced. Echoing Mignon's argument regarding the 'concrete' sources of melancholy, Almond indicates how melancholy does not have a direct object but is symptomatic of the impossibility of having an identity 'at all':

And yet the sadness inherent in *The Black Book* is not simply of having lost one's national identity to the cultural and economic centres of North America and Europe, but rather the melancholy impossibility of ever having an authentic identity at all. (Almond, 2007: 119)

For Sibel Erol the East/West dualism is not restricted to the historical, cultural and geographical positions, but rather contains a discussion of the same/different pair. According to Erol 'Pamuk uses East and West as provisional terms for understanding and representing his real topic of investigation, which is the relationship between similarity and difference.' (Erol, 2007: 403) Unlike Almond who suggests that Pamuk is 'resurrecting East-West dualisms only to collapse them spectacularly the moment they have convinced us' (Almond, 2007: 118) Erol, in her analysis of *Snow*, rather than dismissing the two categories all together, draws attention to their interchangeable aspect as they appear in Pamuk's novel:

While the characters in the novel seem to insist on the substantive and irreconcilable difference between the East and the West, the novel they inhabit shows precisely the interchangeability of East and West, drawing equally from Eastern and Western sources. (Erol, 2007: 422)

Memory, as both national and personal history emerges as an important element of Pamuk's narratives. As Parla affirms in Pamuk's novels 'the past is equal to identity' (Parla, 2006a; 90, *my translation*) and thus is subject to a similar

process of displacement. The construction of identity involves a process of remembering of the past, which inevitably contains the possibility of fiction and modification. The past, for Pamuk, is not an objective source from which an ultimate and originary definition of identity can be obtained, but rather is a narrative that is constantly being re-written.

Walter Andrews notes that memory in Pamuk's novels is far more complicated than 'harmless nostalgia':

In Orhan's novels I am brought face to face with the fact that memory is important. It becomes far more than harmless nostalgia. It is not just the museum we once visited on a class trip or during a sojourn abroad. It is not just the Topkapi Palace or the Ottoman treasury. It is not the buried or sunken detritus of lost civilization or junk at the bottom of an apartment air shaft. It is the *stories* we are going to tell ourselves about all this stuff. Those stories are what enables us to know ourselves, our place in the world, to approach the mystery of why we are here. They justify what we do and point out paths we will follow as individuals, as nations, as societies. And I am also reminded, over and over again, that memory –all memory – is a matter of creation and imagination, not of truth. (Andrews, 2006; 29)

Azade Seyhan, in her analysis of *The Black Book* suggests the following definition of memory:

Pamuk's Istanbul, then, is not a text of a verifiable past. Rather, it is a stage of lived history, where the past comes into being as a vision of the present projected backward. This is one definition of memory, as memory is rarely about the past but instead how the past is remembered or reconstructed in and for the present. And the reconstruction always entails a measure of lack or loss... in *The Black Book*, Pamuk tropes the trials of Turkish modernity as an allegory of loss and disappearance at the level of both individual life and collective culture. (Seyhan, 2008: 149)

Memory thus is deeply connected to the representations of the present and indicative of the loss that marks the Turkish experience of modernity. The loss that dominates memory, as Seyhan defines it, refers to the disappearance of the Ottoman heritage. Erdağ Gökner argues that this loss, represented through the

‘absent text’²⁴ in Pamuk’s novels, far from reflecting a nostalgic perspective, results in what he terms a ‘post-Oriental aesthetic’:

It is by subverting the orientalist-national binary through new practices of narration and intertextuality that Pamuk establishes what I term ‘a post-Oriental aesthetic.’ The motif of the incomplete, failed, or ‘absent text’ of the Pamuk novel, for example, is redeemed by the very text Pamuk has written. Read together, these narratives identify, critique, and subvert the processes of overdetermination articulated by discourses of orientalism and nationalism. The ‘Ottoman’ theme is none other than this, a process of hermeneutic triangulation. (Gökнар, 2006a: 38)

The loss that prefigures in memory is not one that is waiting to be restored through discourses of nationalism or Orientalism, but rather one that results in the creation of a space where Pamuk’s texts become possible.

Alongside the thematic approaches, Pamuk’s novels have also been explored in terms of their stylistic and linguistic novelties. Pamuk’s use of postmodern techniques not only introduces a technical novelty to the Turkish novel but also allows a mimicking of the thematic axis of the narrative in the structures of his novels. Intertextuality, allegory, metafiction, parody, pastiche appear as indispensable elements of Pamuk’s writings, constantly drawing attention to the artificiality of the work of art, unsettling the conventional reader who is looking for the ‘real’ mirrored on the pages of the novel. Erdağ Gökнар states that within the Turkish context the postmodern emerges as the revival of the Ottoman past:

In the Turkish case, the prefix *post-* should be read as signifying a movement away from long-held socialist ideals, Anatolian realism, and an ironic return to Ottoman/Islamic history. Postmodernism in Turkish literature was a movement of *rewriting* and excavating the model forms of the previous fifty years. In other words, it forecast the shortcoming, failures, and idealism of various projects of

²⁴ The ‘absent text’ to which Gökнар refers appears in most of Pamuk’s novels and operates as a source of tension. The constant failure of all attempts to restore the text in its entirety represents the impossibility of a final and ultimate meaning.

modernization. It did not, as is sometimes expressed, indicate a dismissal or failure of modernism but rather introduced multiplicity to a rigid, universal, Eurocentric hierarchy of progress and development. (Göknar, 2006a: 35)

As Erdağ Göknar underlines, the postmodern movement in Turkish literary tradition found a way of expression through the rediscovery of the Ottoman past. However this movement did not emerge as a nostalgic gesture but was used to criticize the totalizing perspective of the modernization movement. Using the forms and techniques of the Ottoman era, Turkish postmodern writing aimed to introduce a multiplicity of voices, themes, histories and meanings.

Yıldız Ecevit in her comprehensive study of *The New Life* explores the multiple layers of Pamuk's novel by offering the reader five alternative readings that include a structuralist reading as well as an analysis of the Sufi elements used in the narrative. Berna Moran writing about *The Black Book* draws attention to the role of intertextuality and suggests that it needs to be read 'not aiming to establish a relation with reality but with other texts' (Moran, 1996: 85, *my translation*).

In addition to the stylistic details, Pamuk's use of the Turkish language has been under scrutiny. Tahsin Yücel, in his essay on *The Black Book*, condemned Pamuk as a novelist on the grounds of his misuse of the Turkish language. Raising the question 'whether a bad writer can be a good novelist?' Yücel evaluates Pamuk's merit based on his use of Turkish, which he defines as 'monotonous and lacking'. Yücel accuses Pamuk of adopting the sentence structure of Western languages:

Envious of Western languages, Pamuk places the subject at the end of a subordinate clause. But because this structure does not fit into the structure of Turkish language the sentences do not flow and the narrative sounds like a bad translation. (Yücel, 1996: 51, *my translation*)

Yücel not only finds faults in the grammar of Pamuk's Turkish but also condemns his use of vocabulary. He states that Pamuk is unaware of the meaning of various words and hence uses them incorrectly. Yücel, looking at the plot of *The Black Book*, concludes that there are various anecdotes that could be taken out without altering the overall plot of the narrative:

Take out half of those pieces, nothing would change; add another half, nothing would change. The term 'encyclopaedic novel' is invented as a cover for the surprise of those who see the novel first as a 'structure'. (Yücel, 1996: 53, *my translation*)

Although for Yücel Pamuk's grammar and vocabulary constitutes a significant obstacle in the way of becoming a good novelist, other critics have praised those elements in Pamuk's writings, indicating that the sentences reflect the honesty of the writer as they say only what needs to be said. Jale Baysal stresses the power of Pamuk's use of Turkish and praises his simplicity on the grounds that it 'takes its reader seriously and takes its poetic power from the lived experience' (Baysal, 1996: 100, *my translation*). Brent Brendemoen in his thorough analysis of the linguistic features of *The Black Book* draws attention to the novelties that Pamuk brings to the Turkish language, underlining the parallel between the plot and the structure of the sentences.

Especially in the first half of the book the sentences are very long and complicated. One of the reasons for that is the writer's desire to reflect the tension that prevails in the protagonist's diligent search for his missing wife in the structure of the sentences. (Brendemoen, 1996: 129, *my translation*)

Similarly, Jale Parla draws attention to the parallel between Pamuk's themes and his use of language. As Parla points out, the uncertainties in many of Pamuk's sentences are not due to his lack of grammatical knowledge but aim to

reflect the unstable world within which his characters struggle to find stable meanings.

His sentences, especially in *The White Castle* reflect people who live in such a world: the place of the subject is never stable, it always shifts; usually goes next to the verb. Thus, this style reflects the subject who struggles to exist with all his hesitations, incompetence, but also with his pretension and obstinacy. So are the little sentences that are left open. He reflects the slipperiness of the grounds of the universe where the subject tries to hold on to, in the language. And there is also, as he indicates, the long sentences that grow folding, accumulating and multiplying. Long sentences that invite us to watch the characters at the three dimensions of time (in his past, present and future) simultaneously. (Parla, 2007: 42, *my translation*)

As Parla notes, Pamuk's unusual use of the Turkish language and the grammatical rules are not arbitrary but are the result of considerate thinking as it reflects the displacement that Pamuk wishes to achieve. As the various examples given above illustrate, the reading of Pamuk's oeuvre covers a wide range of topics related to both its content and form. I now wish to present the framework of my reading of Pamuk's selected works.

C. Displacement in Context

‘There is, of course, no such thing as a perfect mirror. There are only mirrors that perfectly meet our expectations. Every reader who decides to read a novel chooses a mirror according to his or her taste.’ (Pamuk, 2010: 48)

In the light of the contextual framework that I have provided in the previous sections it would be fair to say that Pamuk’s oeuvre is deeply connected to his geographical, temporal and cultural position. Writing from Istanbul, Pamuk’s books communicate with the various definitions of Turkish cultural identity. The specific Turkish context reverberates within the category of ‘world literature’ in its portrayal of a non-European experience. Despite its popularity and connotations of multiplicity and heterogeneity, the label ‘world literature’ proves problematic for the purposes of this study.

The category of ‘world literature’ is by definition circumferential. As is the case with all umbrella terms, it pinpoints a group that shares certain features in common and thus making the constituents of the group similar to one another. This ‘sameness’ operates in two directions: it allows the creation of the label in the first place by privileging the ‘singularity’ of the experience for the members of the same group. The ‘sameness’ that the members of the group share, however, is defined in relation with its ‘difference’ from other groups. In other words, it allows a demarcation between different groups that are united by the coefficient of ‘sameness’. Thus ‘sameness’ shared by the members of the same group is defined through its ‘difference’ from the characteristics that other groups share. The label ‘world literature’ thus becomes possible, first, because it encompasses

narratives that are the products of similar ‘singular’ experiences and, second, because it grants them their ‘singular’ position by distinguishing them from what is *not* ‘world literature’, or more precisely ‘Eurocentric literature’. Djelal Kadir argues that:

Literature, as already noted, is itself the outcome of cultural practice, and to world literature is to give it a particular historical density. Globalization is a process that binds a sphere by the circumference it describes. In the case of literature, the compelling question becomes, who carries out its worlding and why? And in the instance of globalization the inevitable issue is the locus where the fixed foot of the compass that describes the globalizing circumscription is placed. Where the foot of the compass rests is inexorably the center. (Kadir, 2004: 2)

As Kadir notes, the designation of a ‘world literature’ requires the designation of a ‘centre’ from which the difference of the ‘world literature’ would be deduced. This categorization not only differentiates the central from the peripheral but also implies a certain uniqueness of experience that is granted to the narratives of ‘world literature’. The delineation of a ‘world literature’ category enables a ‘centre’ to define itself as the ‘same’ ‘self’, a reference point from which all ‘different’ ‘others’ would emerge. According to Kadir the attempt to obtain a universal category resonates with imperial desires:

And though we may have come to realize that the act of worlding is not uniquely ours, the recrudescence of chatter on the topic of world literature in our critical present, in tandem with imperial moves that circumscribe the world into manageable global boundedness, may not be insignificant and certainly beg for examination. (Kadir, 2004: 7)

The shortcomings of this attempt are not limited to imperial inclinations but also introduce metaphysical affinities as the definition of a narrative as belonging to the category of ‘world literature’ implies that it depicts an ‘authentic experience’. It is thus assumed that the narratives labelled as ‘world literature’ are ‘different’ in so far as they are the representations of an ‘inherently’ distinct

experience. Narratives categorized as ‘world literature’ are thus expected to contain an ‘inherent’ and ‘essential’ meaning in order to be ‘different’ from narratives that are *not* ‘world literature’. In other words, such labelling not only establishes difference through essentialisms but also contends that there is a ‘singular’, ‘authentic’ and ‘inherent’ meaning.

In this study, I will discuss how Pamuk’s oeuvre is an undermining of the authenticity of experience as such. Whether it is the experience of modernity or the experience of Turkish identity, I will argue that Pamuk’s work problematizes the possibility of an ‘inherent’ and ‘essential’ meaning that derives from the ‘singular’ experience. With this study I will display how for Pamuk the only possible way to experience the ‘self’ is through its ‘others’ that become available as its representations. My analysis will rely heavily on the theoretical framework provided by the writings of Jacques Derrida as the problematization of the metaphysical tradition will allow me to explore Pamuk’s undermining of the definition of meaning as presence. I will then study how the displacement of meaning as presence affects the binary positions of original/copy, word/image and real/fictional.

Derrida asserts that Western metaphysics has at its core the definition of being as presence. It is in relation to this originary presence that the meaning of being is defined as presence. This originary and essential presence is then ‘disrupted’ by the interference of ‘exterior’ elements.

We already have a foreboding that phonocentrism merges with the historical determination of the meaning of being in general as *presence*, with all the subdeterminations which depend on this general form and which organize within it their system and their historical sequence (presence of the thing to sight as *eidōs*, presence as substance/ essence/ existence [*ousia*], temporal presence as point [*stigma*] of the now or of the moment [*nun*], the self-presence of the cogito, consciousness, subjectivity, the co-presence of the other and of the self, intersubjectivity as the intentional phenomenon of the ego,

and so forth). Logocentrism would thus support the determination of the being of the entity as presence. (Derrida, 1997: 12)

As a result of the primacy of presence over absence the linguistic system that is used to define this primacy of presence accords superiority to speech over writing. Logocentric thought equates speech with presence whereas writing is accorded a 'supplementary' position and is defined as an effect that happens to speech. The metaphysical definition of writing suggests that writing is a mere derivative of speech and that it is used to record speech, it is a 'tool' an 'instrument' that 'replaces' speech in its absence.

The science of linguistics determines language – its field of objectivity – in the last instance and in the irreducible simplicity of its essence, as the unity of the *phone*, the *glossa*, and the *logos*. This determination is by rights anterior to all the eventual differentiations that could arise within the systems of terminology of the different schools.... With regard to this unity, writing would always be derivative, accidental, particular, exterior, doubling the signifier: Phonetic. 'Sign of a sign', said Aristotle, Rousseau, and Hegel. (Derrida, 1997: 29)

While language is considered to be indicative of the primacy of speech as presence, using Saussure's definition of the sign as 'arbitrary and deferential' Derrida argues that language is itself based on a system of difference, which indicate the impossibility of an inherent, essential meaning. All signs, whether it is visual, textual or auditory, 'represents the present in its absence' (Derrida, 1984: 9) thus making its definition possible through differentiation. The impossibility to re-present 'presence' results in the temporal and spatial displacement in all forms of representation.

when the present cannot be presented, we signify, we go through the detour of the sign. We take or give signs. We signal. The sign, in this sense, is deferred presence. Whether we are concerned with the verbal or the written sign, with the monetary sign, or with electoral delegation and political representation, the circulation of signs defers the moment in which we can encounter the thing itself, make it ours,

consume or expend it, touch it, see it, intuit its presence. What I am describing here in order to define it is the classically determined structure of the sign in all the banality of its characteristics – signification as the *différance* of temporization. (Derrida, 1984: 9)

Derrida suggests that language, as signification could never represent meaning as presence as it is made possible through differentiation. Language is always and already a play of *différance*; it is not the reference to an originary presence but establishes difference as the only possible way to produce meaning. Derrida states that the presence is not the originary, pure entity as the metaphysics suggest but rather is a perpetual movement that differs and defers:

First, différance refers to the (active and passive) movement that consists in deferring by means of delay, delegation, reprieve, referral, detour, postponement, reserving. In this sense, différance is not preceded by the originary and indivisible unity of a present possibility that I could reserve, like an expenditure that I would put off calculatedly or for reasons of economy. What defers presence, on the contrary, is the very basis on which presence is announced or desired in what represents it, its sign, its trace...’ (Derrida, 2004a: 7)

As a result of *différance*, the primacy of speech over writing becomes problematic. Because speech can no longer be defined in relation to an originary and intact presence, the ‘supplementary’ role assigned to writing is also called into question. Given that language is a system of signs that constantly differ and defer signification, writing can no longer be defined as the ‘supplement’ that replaces the primacy of speech but rather emerges as the name of all inscription. Writing as Derrida defines it is the *trace* that amounts to the chain of signification.

Now we tend to say ‘writing’ for all that and more: to designate not only the physical gestures of literal pictographic or ideographic inscription, but also the totality of what makes it possible; and also, beyond the signifying face, the signified face itself. And thus we say ‘writing’ for all that gives rise to an inscription in general, whether it is literal or not and even if what it distributes in space is alien to the order of the voice: cinematography, choreography, of course, but also pictorial, musical, sculptural ‘writing’. (Derrida, 1997: 9)

Effectively Derrida advocates a new definition of writing that does not contain any implications of precedence. Writing as *trace* refers to all inscriptions that introduce a sign within a web of signification. It is the interactions within this chain of signification that would disseminate meaning as *différance*. Within this framework, meaning is no longer the originary presence that is the inherent quality of a sign but rather emerges as a perpetual movement of difference and deferral. Meaning can no longer be defined in terms of binary positioning of exterior/interior as the effect of circumference becomes displaced through the *trace*:

In the extent to which what is called 'meaning' (to be 'expressed') is already, and thoroughly, constituted by a tissue of differences, in the extent to which there is already a *text*, a network of textual referrals to *other* texts, a textual transformation in which each allegedly 'simple term' is marked by the trace of another term, the presumed interiority of meaning is already worked upon by its own exteriority. It is always already carried outside itself. It already differs (from itself) before any act of expression. And only on this condition can it constitute a syntagm or text. (Derrida, 2004a: 28)

Consequently meaning is no longer a lost originary presence that needs to be restored through signification but the constant play of *différance*. Meaning for Derrida is always and already operating within a set of signification that allows dissemination and that is why for Derrida '*there is nothing outside of the text* [there is no outside-text, *il n'y a pas de hors-texte*] (Derrida, 1997: 158).

Meaning defined as dissemination also affects the possibility of representation in the sense that representation no longer emerges as the attempt to restore an original, inherent meaning but rather becomes possible as the constant displacement that outlines the text as *différance*. The sign no longer refers to an originary meaning as presence but rather establishes a text within which repetition of the same results in dissemination. The sign thus does not represent an

authentic, originary experience but rather displays writing as *trace*. Representation becomes possible not as the attempt to restore an originary presence but as constant displacement: ‘This displacement does not take place, has not taken place once, as an *event*. It does not occupy a simple place. It does not take place *in* writing. This dis-location (is what) writes/is written.’ (Derrida, 2004: 207)

In the light of this theoretical framework, in this study I will argue that the figuration of identity within the works of Pamuk exemplifies the displacement that allows the production of meaning. In the three books that I will discuss, the identity as ‘self’, ‘presence’, ‘history’ or ‘meaning’ will become possible through its ‘others’ as representation. I will argue that for Pamuk representation of identity can never be achieved as the restoring of an original singular ‘event’ as the source of primary meaning because the experience of identity is always and already multiple and fragmented. For Pamuk the representations of the experience of identity do not entail an impossible mission to restore an authentic experience but rather foreground the possible texts within which meaning as displacement can become possible.

Within this framework the definition of identity as proposed by Homi Bhabha proves highly significant, as it indicates not only the impossibility of self-contained experience of identity but also underlines difference as the only possible representation:

Meaning is constructed across the bar of difference and separation between the signifier and the signified. So it follows that no culture is full unto itself, no culture is plainly plenitudinous, not only because there are other cultures which contradict its authority, but also because its own symbol-forming activity, its own interpellation in the process of representation, language, signification and meaning-making always underscores the claim to an originary, holistic, organic identity. (Bhabha, 1998a: 210)

The three books that I will analyse in this study will offer a similar definition of the experience of identity as rather than aiming to restore an ‘inherent’ meaning that is generated by the ‘singular’ ‘event’, Pamuk’s representations will confirm the possibility of meaning through displacement. The representation in Pamuk’s texts will emerge as displacement, that is:

imitating an original in such a way that the priority of the original is not reinforced but by the very fact that it *can* be simulated, copied, transferred, transformed, made into a simulacrum and so on: the ‘original’ is never finished or complete in itself. (Bhabha, 1998a: 210)

Within this framework the binary positions of the self/other, modern/traditional, original/copy, history/fiction are problematized as Pamuk offers alternative representations of the ‘self’ that far from prioritizing an ‘original experience’ unravel the indispensable role of the repetition as simulacrum.

The chapters of this study are ordered chronologically and each chapter is dedicated to the analysis of one book. This organization, rather than enforcing a thematic circumference among the chapters, aims to portray the variety of perspectives from which Pamuk discusses the representation of identity. The chronological ordering of the books is in no way to suggest a linear, progressive development of Pamuk’s thoughts but is the result of practical concerns.

My analysis will start with *The White Castle*, which outlines the primary questions of Pamuk’s line of enquiry. I will discuss how through the use of East/West binary, Pamuk refutes the possibility of a singular and authentic definition of the ‘self’. Focusing on the recurrent use of the mirror throughout the narrative I will discuss its symbolic presence in Pamuk’s oeuvre. In the light of the psychosexual development as outlined by Lacan’s mirror stage, I will argue that for Pamuk the mirror image is not the scene of a unified totality but rather is

always already fragmented and multiple. Through a comparative perspective, I will argue that refuting Tanpınar's use of the mirror imagery, which is indicative of the loss of a prior unity, Pamuk displays the displacement that is at work in the process of identification. The historical framework of the novel as well as the different diegetic levels will provide important lines of enquiry to display the possibility of meaning as dissemination.

The next chapter will focus on the aesthetic perspective provided by *My Name is Red*. Using the distinct painting traditions that echo of the binary positioning of the East/West I will discuss the possibility of representing a singular 'self'. Focusing on the stylistic parallels between miniature painting and novel genre I will explore how the distinct modes of representation affect the production of meaning.

Lastly I will analyse *Istanbul: Memories of a City*, which represents an experience of displacement both stylistically and contextually. I will discuss the different ways in which Pamuk problematizes the definition of memory as the loss that needs to be restored. I will explore how the representation of memory as the fragmented and multiple narratives reverberates within the definition of the experience of the 'self' as 'an-other'.

II. The Story of the 'I': *The White Castle*

The White Castle with its surprising plot, different diegetic levels and paratextual elements offers a rich discussion of the process of the construction of the ‘self’. Despite its short length it successfully incorporates various themes and techniques that become landmarks of Pamuk’s writings. Published in 1985, *The White Castle* is Pamuk’s third novel and the first one to be translated into English. *The White Castle* opens with a preface,²⁵ which constitutes the framing story. Signed by Faruk Darvinoğlu, a character from Pamuk’s previous novel *Silent House*, the preface tells about Faruk’s discovery of the manuscript, the contents of which will constitute the main body of the narrative. Addressing the reader, Faruk explains how he came across the manuscript, how he decided to transcribe, translate and finally publish it.

After the preface comes the homodiegetic story of the Venetian slave²⁶ and the Ottoman Hoja²⁷ set in seventeenth century Istanbul. The Venetian, who also appears as the narrator, is an Italian scholar who is captured and kept as a slave by the Turks. He is given to Hoja, who looks exactly like him, to teach him everything he knows. The two men who look alike initially despise each other and try to establish themselves as distinct by making use of different hierarchies. Despite all the binary oppositions through which they try to define themselves, their physical similarity prevents such an absolute separating line from being

²⁵ It is important to note that this section is entitled *giriş* in Turkish, which could be translated as ‘introduction’. The word ‘preface’ which is used in the English translation of *The White Castle* would correspond to the word *önsöz* in Turkish. Erdağ Göknaar refers to that section as ‘something of a translator’s foreword’ (Göknaar, 2010: 126).

²⁶ Throughout the narrative the Italian slave’s proper name is never revealed. To prevent confusion I will henceforth refer to him as ‘the Venetian’.

²⁷ Hoja embodies two distinct meanings; it can be used to refer to both a university teacher and a religious teacher of Islam. As Erdağ Göknaar notes ‘*hoca* refers to both the republican professor of history as well as the *medrese*-educated master’ (Göknaar, 2010: 137). The use of the word ‘hoja’ not only highlights the secular/religious tension that is immanent in the Turkish culture but also hints at the uncertainty regarding the identity of the narrator of *The White Castle*.

drawn. Their desire to emerge as distinct individuals is made explicit by the question that Hoja voices: ‘Why am I what I am?’ Failing to come up with a definite answer to that question they finally decide to take each other’s place; the penultimate chapter closes with the scene where Hoja walks into the night wearing the Venetian’s clothes and the Venetian goes back to sleep in Hoja’s bed with his clothes on. Following this scene in the final chapter of *The White Castle* the reader is left with the puzzle surrounding the identity of the narrator. The first person narration and the lack of proper names make it impossible for the reader to answer the question ‘Who is speaking?’

Following the eleven chapters comes the afterword²⁸ signed by Orhan Pamuk. In the afterword, in a very similar vein to Faruk in the preface, Orhan Pamuk explains the creative process of the narrative while also offering the reader a genealogy of the elements that compose it. The metafictional dimension that is added to the narrative with the afterword contributes to the displacement that Pamuk wishes to obtain as it rather than functioning as a space where the mystery is unravelled, reinforces the prevailing mysteries further.

As will become evident in the following chapters the proper name plays a significant part in Pamuk’s oeuvre. With *The White Castle* Pamuk shows how as much as the presence and use of the proper name, its absence could also operate as a crucial strategy. The protagonists of the homodiegetic level of the narrative – the Venetian and Hoja – are deprived of distinctive proper names. The proper name of the Venetian slave, who is also the narrator, is never made clear whereas Hoja’s real name is substituted with the nickname ‘Hoja’. The Venetian while

²⁸ It is important to note that the afterword written in 1986 appears only in the Turkish editions of *The White Castle*. The English translation of the text can be found in the collection of essays entitled *Other Colours* (2007). This ambiguous position of the afterword – as to whether it is part of the book or not - reverberates the uncertainty regarding the identity of the narrator.

explaining the reason behind this replacement also gives an important clue regarding Hoja's real name: 'Perhaps it came from this man who, because he did not like being named after his grandfather, wanted me to call him 'Hoja'' (Pamuk, 2001: 15). This hint eventually becomes relevant when Hoja tells about the days when he and his mother used to visit his grandfather at the hospital in Edirne:

... he'd wander through other rooms where strange, colourful bottles and jars shone brightly; another time he lost his way, started to cry, and they'd taken him to every room in the whole hospital one by one before finding his grandfather Abdullah Efendi's room; sometimes his mother cried, sometimes she listened with her daughter to the old man's stories. (Pamuk, 2001: 68)

Based on the clue offered by the Venetian it could be concluded that Hoja's real name is Abdullah Effendi. This name apart from being the only proper name revealed in the homodiegetic level of *The White Castle* also establishes an intertextual link with Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's collection of short stories *The Dreams of Abdullah Effendi*.²⁹ The story 'The Dreams of Abdullah Effendi' which also gives its title to the collection, tells the story of Abdullah Effendi who dreams of the presence of another Abdullah within him. This duality appears as a source of anxiety for Abdullah Effendi who wishes to silence the unbearable voice of the other Abdullah. The representation of this duality as something that needs to be eliminated reflects the scope of Tanpınar's work. According to Tanpınar, Turkish identity is marked with a sense of loss of a prior, unified and singular selfhood. As Nurdan Gürbilek notes Tanpınar's work is defined by a 'a longing for the past, a dream of wholeness related to the individual's or nation's childhood; a persistence to go home, to go back to the self' (Gürbilek, 2007: 133, *my translation*). While reflecting the angst caused by this feeling of loss in his

²⁹ Here I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Jale Parla who has drawn my attention to this significant connection.

oeuvre, Tanpınar also suggests that the only way to recuperate that sense of unity is to re-establish an ideal image of the 'self', which could only be achieved through a harmonious unity of traditional and modern values.

Within this framework the use of the name 'Abdullah' operates as Pamuk's response to Tanpınar. For Pamuk, as the ambivalence regarding the identity of the narrator displays, there is no prior 'self' that one could go back to, as the 'self' is always already constituted of fragments. The stories that the Venetian and Hoja tell about themselves indicates how for Pamuk identity is not a lost totality that needs to be restored but rather a representation, a story, that is re-created with the multiple fragments. As the ambiguous ending of *The White Castle* indicates, for Pamuk, the 'self' is not a totality obtained by the bringing together of the two sides of the binary but rather is always already fragmented and multiple.

In addition to this important link that the name Abdullah establishes with Tanpınar's oeuvre, the lack of proper names is a significant strategy that Pamuk incorporates in order to call into question the various labels that operate through binaries. Pamuk uses the inability to distinguish between Hoja and the Venetian, as a way to introduce these labels, which are constantly being displaced throughout the narrative. Some of the labels that could be used to differentiate between the two men include: The East/West, master/slave, and self/other. Within the framework of the metaphysical tradition these dualities operate as hierarchical dualities that also mark a definite line of separation. Throughout the narrative the two men's attempts to distinguish themselves from the other through these binaries will fail, indicating the impossibility of defining an essential and originary 'self' from which the 'other' could be derived.

Within this framework, in this chapter I will focus on the implication of the alleged similarity between the Venetian and Hoja and how the undecidability that runs throughout the narrative operates in the attempt to define identity. I will discuss the implication of the Venetian and Hoja for one another while also analysing its reverberations on the broader Turkish context. Taking into account the different heterodiegetic levels as well as the paratextual elements of *The White Castle* I will try to establish a parallel between the construction of the 'self' and the construction of a 'story'.

A. The Venetian and Hoja

Uncertainty is the driving force of *The White Castle*. Apparent in different forms in the different diegetic levels of the narrative, uncertainty emerges as the triggering force behind the questions that the narrative raises as well as the possible answers to these questions. The main diegetic level of *The White Castle*, which tells the story of a Venetian slave and the Ottoman Hoja is constructed around the fact that these two men look alike. Their physical resemblance, which becomes dubious at various stages throughout the narrative, leads to an alleged exchange of identities, creating uncertainty regarding the identity of the narrator. Within this framework I will analyse the components within the narrative that lead to the development of an ambiguous state while also focusing on the repercussions of the uncertainty obtained.

The narrator of *The White Castle* starts by telling of the day he was captured by the Turks. This opening suggests that it is the Venetian slave who is speaking:

We were sailing from Venice to Naples when the Turkish fleet appeared. We numbered three ships all told, but the file of their galleys emerging from the fog seemed to have no end. We lost our nerve; fear and confusion instantly broke out on our ship, and our oarsmen, most of them Turks and Moors, were screaming with joy. (Pamuk, 2001: 5)

The narrator explains the conditions of the initial encounter with the Turkish fleet, which leads to his captivity. The use of the first person plural marks the distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’, the Italians and the Turks respectively, a distinction which from the outset constructs the narrator’s identity as non-Turkish.

The size of the Turkish fleet obliterates all hopes for the Italians, leading to an immediate desperation and surrender on their part.

While this episode creates the impression that the narrator is remembering, a passage a little later leads the reader already to cast doubt on such an assumption. In explaining how he had decided to tell his story, the narrator creates uncertainty regarding the very nature of that story.

Many men believe that no life is determined in advance, that all stories are essentially a chain of coincidences. And yet, even those who believe this come to the conclusion, when they look back, that events they once took for chance were really inevitable. I have reached that moment now, as I sit at an old table writing my book, visualizing³⁰ the colours of the Turkish ships appearing like phantoms in the fog; this seems the best of times to tell a tale. (Pamuk, 2001: 5)

The parallel that the narrator establishes between stories and life will be a major theme throughout the narrative by drawing attention to the impossibility of a fixed and predetermined meaning that can be obtained. The sequence of events that constitutes one's life, just like a story, invites various readings. Hence rather than providing an ultimate definition of the 'self' this sequence of events, which are made into stories, creates a space where an endless dissemination of meaning becomes possible. According to the narrator, however, this tangible and fragmented perspective is eventually turned into an 'inevitable' sequence of events as it would provide a fixed and singular life story that would be unique to the individual. In other words by re-ordering these events the individual would be able to compose his 'story', assigning meaning to the random set of events that constitute his or her life. By turning the various possibilities into an 'inevitable' version, one also obtains a life story that is given meaning to; these events do not

³⁰ In the original Turkish edition the verb used is *düşlemek* which could be translated as 'to dream' or 'to imagine'. This is important to note as the English version 'to visualize' does not convey the imagined, constructed feature that is explicit in the Turkish original.

contain an inherent meaning but rather acquire significance as they become part of a story. The representation of these events in a narrative is how one's identity as representation is created. As I will discuss in the following sections both the Venetian and Hoja will use anecdotes from their childhood memories to create life stories in order to emerge distinct from one another.

The narrator's referral to the book that he is writing implies that he is not only the narrator but also the writer of this and other stories. The emergence of this new identity for the narrator also affects the categorization of the story that he is telling the readers. If the narrator is also a 'writer' then his books, including this one, might contain 'fiction' alongside 'fact'. By indicating the possible inclusion of fictional elements, the narrator creates uncertainty regarding the reference of his story. This initial hint will later on become more evident as both the Venetian and Hoja will make it explicit that they combine dreams, memories and facts to compose their life stories.

This initial indication of the possibility of fiction not only casts doubt on the 'factuality' of the events that the narrator includes in his book but also, by creating uncertainty, draws attention to the problematic line that separates memories and fiction. The recreation of the past in the present is a complex and problematic process where reliability and truthfulness appear to be the major concerns. Once events – whether communal or personal³¹ – of the past are recreated in the present, the need to distinguish between fact and fiction emerges

³¹ The complex set of relations that are in contact within the framework of the distinction between fiction and history also include a differentiation between memory and history. According to Pierre Nora 'la mémoire est un absolu et l'histoire ne connaît que le relatif' (Nora, 1997; 25). Nevertheless within the scope of my analysis I will refrain from such a distinction by differentiating between personal and communal histories.

as a major question as representation takes a central role. Richard Terdiman underlines the entanglement of memory and representation as follows:

What has happened is memory. Whenever anything is conserved and reappears in a representation, we are in the presence of a memory effect. Memory thus complicates the rationalist segmentation of chronology into 'then' and 'now'. In memory, the time line becomes tangled and folds back on itself. Such a complication constitutes our lives and defines our experience. The complex of practices and means by which the past invests the present is memory: *memory is the present past*. (Terdiman, 1993: 8)

As representation emerges as an indispensable component of memory, the line separating 'fact' from 'fiction' becomes blurred. Paul Ricoeur in his *Memory, History, Forgetting* adopts a phenomenological perspective and draws attention to the difficulty that involves distinguishing between fictional and historical writing. Establishing narration as the common ground for both history and fiction, Ricoeur poses the following question: 'What difference separates history from fiction, if both narrate?' (Ricoeur, 2006: 241)

The answer is far from evident because the definition of history as an all-encompassing linear totality has long lost its validity as a result of the inevitable processes of repetition through representation, which is an indispensable component of all acts of testimony. In order for a past event to be re-created in the present that event needs to be repeated. This repetition not only challenges the singularity of the event but also the irreplaceable 'I' who remembers. Remembering far from restoring an originary totality is a process of re-invention through representation. As Terdiman notes:

Representation as remembrance foregrounds the fact that experience is always *other* than it *was*: inevitably and constitutively *historical*. Such a construction situates memory as the most consistent agent of the transformations by which the referential world is made into a universe of signs. (Terdiman, 1993: 70)

Remembering as representation thus obliterates the definition of the past moment as a singular experience but requires its repetition. Only through repetition can the past event be represented in the present as remembrance. The condition of the singularity of the event depends, as Derrida indicates, on its rendering 'universal' through representation.

The exemplarity of the 'instant,' that which makes it an 'instance,' if you like, is that it is singular, like any exemplarity, singular *and* universal, singular *and* universalizable. The singular must be universalizable; this is the testimonial condition. (Derrida, 2000: 41)

Testifying to the singularity of an event, remembering a past event, as a singular occurrence is only possible through its reproduction in the present through repetition. Echoing Ricoeur's enquiry, Derrida indicates the inevitable presence of fiction in all representation, as it is through repetition that the event can be made present. In order to record the singularity of experience, one needs to repeat it as representation, thus uncovering the always already present possibility of fiction.

And yet, if the testimonial is by law irreducible to the fictional, there is no testimony that does not structurally imply in itself the possibility of fiction, simulacra, dissimulation, lie, and perjury – that is to say, the possibility of literature, of the innocent or perverse literature that innocently plays at perverting all of these distinctions. If this possibility that it seems to prohibit were effectively excluded, if testimony thereby became proof, information, certainty, or archive, it would lose its function as testimony. In order to remain testimony, it must therefore allow itself to be haunted. (Derrida, 2000: 29)

The repetition of the singular event as testimony or remembrance inevitably acquires the possibility of fiction. Thus the initial hint that implied that the narrator of *The White Castle* was telling a 'fictional' story emerges not as an opposition to a 'factual' account but rather indicates the only possible way to remember. By referring to his narrative as a 'story' the narrator rather than

professing juxtaposition between ‘story’ and ‘history’ underlines the possibility of fiction in all attempts to represent the event.

This initial uncertainty regarding the frame of reference of the Venetian’s narrative is compounded by a similar uncertainty regarding the narrator himself. Telling about the person he used to be before being captured by the Turks, the narrator stresses the fact that there is a distinction between who he was and who he is now. On the one hand this emphasis foreshadows the apparent exchange of identities that will take place in the penultimate chapter between Hoja and the Venetian, on the other hand it points to the ever-shifting constitution of identity:

In those days I was a different person, even called a different name by mother, fiancée and friends. Once in a while I still see in my dreams that person who used to be me, or who I now believe was me, and wake up drenched in sweat. (Pamuk, 2001: 6)

The narrator’s distinction between who he used to be and who he is now, is significant not merely in terms of the exchange between Hoja and the Venetian but also in relation to the process of identity formation. The chain of relations that he had established with his mother, fiancée and friends, provides the space within which he could define himself. It is through these bonds that the narrator was who he used to be. Once the conditions in which he related to the people that constituted his immediate circle changed, the narrator can no longer define himself as he used to do. In the absence of the previously established connections and frame of reference, the narrator *is* no longer who he was because it is his representation within that frame of reference that made him ‘who he was’. Not an essential originary meaning but rather his representation among his friends and family that makes the narrator ‘what he is’. Once the frame of reference is

eliminated he needs to re-invent himself through different representations, thus become ‘an-other’.

This suggestion from the very beginning of the book that identity is labile and differential becomes much more insistent when the narrator meets ‘Hoja’ who will be his main Turkish other. Following his captivity the Venetian needs to re-define himself in this new setting where he acquires new roles while losing others that he previously held. Initially through his scientific knowledge the narrator successfully obtains a more privileged position among the slaves. He successfully prepares medicine that cures the pasha’s shortness of breath. Impressed by the Venetian’s achievement the pasha wants him to collaborate with Hoja for the preparation of the fireworks that will be used at his daughter’s wedding ceremonies. The Venetian describes their initial encounter as follows:

After a few moments another door opened and someone five or six years older than myself came in. I looked up at his face in shock – immediately I was terrified! The resemblance between myself and the man who entered the room was incredible! It was *me* there... for that first instant this was what I thought. (Pamuk, 2001: 12)

As soon as the Venetian sets eyes on Hoja he notices the uncanny resemblance, which makes him think that this other man was himself. The words of the narrator imply that they look so alike that it is impossible to distinguish between the two men. The narrator’s certainty, however, is rapidly overshadowed by doubt in the following lines.

As our eyes met, we greeted one another. But he did not seem surprised. Then I decided he didn’t resemble me all that much, he had a beard; and I seemed to have forgotten what my own face looked like. As he sat down facing me, I realized that it had been a year since I last looked in a mirror. (Pamuk, 2001: 13)

As opposed to the narrator who was terrified of their resemblance, the other man who entered the room, Hoja, does not show any indication of surprise when he sees the narrator. In addition to this substantial discrepancy in their reactions, the immediate shift in the narrator's certainty produces doubt regarding the extent of their similarity. The narrator's swiftly changing focus eventually highlights the fact that he has not looked at his own reflection in a long time. Having forgotten his own physical features, it would be difficult for the narrator to conclude that he and Hoja looked alike. Following his primary shock the narrator decides that Hoja '... didn't resemble me all that much...' (Pamuk, 2001: 13) The narrator's sudden shift and the lack of physical descriptions of either men cast doubt on their similarity. Hoja's lack of surprise as well as the Venetian's fast revocation make his initial reaction even more ambiguous. If they did not look alike, why was the Venetian so surprised to see Hoja in the first place? This perpetual sense of uncertainty that Pamuk establishes at the beginning and develops further throughout the narrative is far more significant than the extent of the similarity between the two men. The ambiguity, by creating a blurry space where no clear lines can be drawn illustrates the impossibility of offering a definite answer to the question 'Why am I what I am?'

The Venetian's reference to the absence of his mirror image adds to the confusion regarding the similarity between the two men. He comments on the fact that he hasn't looked in the mirror for a long time, which implies that he does not have an accurate knowledge of his own image. In other words he does not have a definition of his 'self'.

The Venetian's uncertainty regarding his own appearance invites the following question: If the Venetian does not recall his own image how does he

conclude that he and Hoja look alike? In addition to thus deepening the uncertainty regarding their similarity this piece of information brings to the foreground an object that has crucial symbolic value: the mirror.

As is the case in Pamuk's oeuvre in general, in *The White Castle* too the mirror³² plays a significant role, giving rise to crucial questions regarding the attempt to define identity. The narrator's reference to the mirror does not only concern his self-perception but also brings to the foreground, very early on in the text, the notion of a mirror image between the 'self' and the 'other', the process of identification as well as the construction of an ideal image of the 'self'.

Jacques Lacan assigns a very crucial role to the mirror in the formation of the 'I'. According to Lacan, the child prior to his introduction to language with the symbolic order undergoes the imaginary stage where he encounters his own image in the mirror. Once the child starts recognizing his own body as distinct from the mother's he also experiences a loss. With the disappearance of the image of the mother's body as a whole, unified self, the child looks for alternative ways to replace it. The reflection of the child's image in the mirror provides an alternative image that the child can use as a replacement for the loss of the mother. As the child recognizes his own image in the mirror, he also replaces the fragmented perception of his own body with this unified image. Thus for the first time the child can experience his 'self' as a unified being as opposed to the earlier fragmented sensation of his own body. As Dylan Evans states the mirror stage is the result of a discrepancy between what the child sees and feels:

³² The mirror, an important component of Pamuk's narratives, also plays a significant role in Tanpınar's aesthetics. Despite assigning distinct roles to the mirror, both authors approach it with similar questions. In both Tanpınar and Pamuk's oeuvre the mirror represents the desire to know the 'self' thoroughly.

The baby sees its own image as whole (see GESTALT), and the synthesis of this image produces a sense of contrast with the uncoordination of the body, which is experienced as FRAGMENTED BODY; this contrast is first felt by the infant as a rivalry with its own image, because the wholeness of the image threatens the subject with fragmentation, and the mirror stage thereby gives rise to an aggressive tension between the subject and the image (see AGGRESIVITY). In order to resolve this aggressive tension, the subject identifies with the image; this primary identification with the counterpart is what forms the ego... This identification also involves the ideal ego which functions as a promise of future wholeness which sustains the ego in anticipation. (Evans, 2003: 115)

The mirror image is home to the ideal ego, which represents a fantasy of wholeness for the child. It is a replacement for the lost image of the mother that constituted an ideal unity for the child. The mirror image therefore while allowing the child to recognize its own image also introduces an alterity into this process of identification. The child identifies with his mirror image which represents an ideal image of unity while remaining ‘other’ to the child. Pamuk plays with the alterity of the mirror image by introducing the ‘other’ – the Venetian and Hoja operates as ‘other’ to each other – as the ‘mirror image’ of the ‘self’. Lacan’s definition of the mirror stage reverberates in the relation between Hoja and the Venetian; however, the ideal position of the Lacanian mirror image is absent in *The White Castle*, resulting in a fragmented definition of the ‘self’. *The White Castle* questions the representation of the mirror image as an originary, unique ideal of identification, instead suggesting fragmented and multiple reflections. The formation of identity as a process of aspiration towards an ideal and uniform state will therefore need to be re-formulated once that ideal breaks into pieces.

Within the theoretical framework of the Lacanian discourse, Turkey is represented by the child that is trying to identify with the ideal image of the ‘other’ that appears in the mirror, the unified image of the lost mother. The modernization movement that occurred in Turkey following the foundation of the

Republic while establishing the West as an ideal object of desire also condemned Turkish modernity as inadequate. By allocating the role of a child in need of development to the Turkish identity, this deprecatory perspective introduces a hierarchy between the fully developed Western experience and its Turkish counterpart. Accordingly the mirror stage parallel could be considered as the reverberation of this discourse that aims at ‘the infantilization of the national identity that desperately needs the West to survive’ (Ahiska, 2003: 355).

In *The White Castle* it is with The Venetian’s reference to the lack of a mirror image that Pamuk problematizes the future promise of ‘wholeness’ represented by the Western ideal. The absence of a mirror image for the narrator represents the absence of a unified image with which he could identify to form an intact and homogenous definition of the ‘self’. His reference to the absence of such an image thus implies not only his unawareness of his own image but also the lack of an absolute definition of a unified ‘self’. Hoja’s presence thus functions as an alternative to the lacking mirror image; he replaces that ideal image by – briefly – restoring the hope of wholeness, not with his physical appearance but through his representation of ‘otherness’ for the Venetian.

While working in collaboration to prepare fireworks for the pasha’s daughter’s wedding ceremony, The Venetian and Hoja follow a similar strategy in adopting a scornful attitude towards each other. Their mutual dislike turns out to be the only point on which they do not disagree: ‘In those days it was perhaps only in this way we understood each other: each of us looked down on the other.’ (Pamuk, 2001: 15)

Although the pasha is happy with the Venetian’s services he wishes him to convert to Islam. For that purpose he takes a bet with Hoja: if the Venetian

converts to Islam, pasha gets to keep him but if he does not he will be given to Hoja as his slave. The Venetian is asked various times whether he will convert and he repeatedly refuses. As a final warning the Venetian is told that he will be beheaded if he does not convert to Islam, he refuses again and waits for the guards to kill him. At that moment in order to overcome his fear he tries to think of something pleasant and remembers the view he had from his house.

When I tried to think of something else the scene through the window overlooking the garden behind our house came to life before my eyes: peaches and cherries lay on a tray inlaid with mother-of-pearl upon a table, behind the table was a divan upholstered with straw matting strewn with feather cushions the same colour as the green window-frame; further back, I saw a sparrow perched on the edge of a well among the olive and cherry trees. A swing tied with long ropes to a high branch of a walnut-tree swayed slightly in a barely perceptible breeze. (Pamuk, 2001: 21)

With its attention to detail this passage gives the impression of being a unique moment that the Venetian remembers from his days in Italy, nevertheless, it is important to note that despite the minute details, there is no evidence that would lead to the conclusion that this scene belongs exclusively to Italy. Accordingly, in the final chapter of the narrative, the same scene is presented as the view that the narrator has from the window of his house in Gebze in Turkey. I will discuss further the implications of this repetition in the following pages but suffice it to say that this short passage problematizes the definition of the 'self' as the source of an originary and essential meaning.

The subsequent development of the narrative is concerned with Hoja's desire to differentiate himself from the Venetian. As a result of his refusal to convert the Venetian is given to Hoja as his slave. The two men work on different projects; the Venetian teaches Hoja his scientific expertise that would help him accomplish his plans that include a mechanism for 'a clock which would require

setting and adjusting only once a month rather than a week' (Pamuk, 2001: 27). The Venetian's superior position does not last for too long as Hoja, an avid learner, quickly catches up with the Venetian and thus succeeds in drawing the sultan's attention.

Hoja impresses the sultan with the model of the solar system that he had constructed and the interesting story that he had composed for him. Hoja's efforts mainly target the sultan, as he believes that he could easily manipulate him to support his projects. It is also during this time that Hoja expresses growing interest and dislike for the people that he calls the 'others', the 'fools' or simply 'they':

When he saw me look blank he said seriously, 'I'm thinking about the fools. Why are they so stupid?' Then, as if he knew what my answer would be, he added, 'Very well, they aren't stupid, but there is something missing inside their heads.' I didn't ask who 'they' were.... For a long time we sat facing one another in silence. 'Who can know why a man is the way he is anyway?' he said at last. (Pamuk, 2001: 36)

Although Hoja's ontological enquiry is directed at 'them', he is actually interested in defining the qualities that make one 'what he is' in order to be able to differentiate himself from the Venetian. He therefore takes this enquiry a step further and obtains the question that marks *The White Castle*:

One evening when Hoja's steps creaked through the house to my room and he said, as if asking the most ordinary sort of question, 'Why am I what I am?'³³ I wanted to encourage him and tried to answer. (Pamuk, 2001: 48)

³³ An interesting coincidence that I wish to refer to may open up new discussions regarding the implications of this question. Žižek states that in the Slovene translation of Shakespeare's Richard II the line 'No, not that name was given me at the front' is translated as 'Why am I what I am?' Žižek claims that despite taking great liberty, the translation conveys the essence of the situation: '... deprived in its symbolic titles, Richard's identity melts like a snowman's in the sun' (Žižek, 2006: 35).

The ramifications of the question ‘Why am I what I am?’ are not limited to Hoja but reflect one of Pamuk’s main preoccupations. It indicates the dissolving of the conventional norms used to determine identity. The various conventional criteria such as the nationality, proper name, physical appearance or professional skills, remain inoperative in distinguishing Hoja from the Venetian. None of these attributes provide the singular and absolute definition that Hoja is looking for, with the question ‘Why am I what I am?’

Prior to the Venetian’s arrival, Hoja’s identity was constructed within the Lacanian framework; Hoja’s ‘self’ was defined in relation with an ideal state of unity symbolized by his mirror image. This singular image, however, is disrupted with the emergence of the Venetian who distorts the fantasy of a singular and ideal mirror image by providing yet another mirror image due to his physical similarity with Hoja. Consequently following the encounter with the Venetian, Hoja can no longer find an ideal and unique image with which to identify as the Venetian obliterates all such attempts by providing multiple ‘mirror images’.³⁴

Hoja initially tries to ignore the disappearance of the ideal mirror image as a comforting source of identification and resorts to the mirror again to restore his singular identity: ‘So what should I do, look in the mirror?’ (Pamuk, 2001: 49) Hoja’s enquiry reflects how he considers the mirror image as a confirmation of his singular identity; much like the Lacanian subject, Hoja too tries to re-establish an ideal mirror image with which he can identify in order to construct his identity as pure and singular. The Venetian, to support Hoja’s query claims that the mirror

³⁴ I am using Hoja as the reference point not to privilege him as the ‘self’ but because he is the one who asks the question ‘Why am I what I am?’ The same process applies to the Venetian whose mirror images multiply with the emergence of Hoja, thus leaving him unable to obtain a unique definition for his ‘self’.

indeed plays an important role where he comes from and that it is a common item in many households.

I said 'they' did look in the mirror, and in fact much more often than people here did. Not only the palaces of kings, princes, and noblemen, but the homes of ordinary people as well, were full of mirrors carefully framed and hung upon the walls; it wasn't only because of this but because 'they' constantly thought about themselves that 'they' had progressed in this respect. (Pamuk, 2001: 50)

The mirror here serves as a distinguishing factor between the two cultures, which is more in line with Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's position than Pamuk's. The presence of the mirror in the Western households implies the significant role of the mirror image that allowed identification thus leading to a definition of the 'self'. In the Turkish context, on the other hand, the absence of the mirror indicates the lack of a mirror image, and thus an unfulfilled identification. The reformations that were put into effect following the foundation of the Turkish Republic not only aimed to create a modern nation like its Western counterparts but also endeavoured to sever all ties with the Ottoman past. The modernization movement, while removing the mirror image with which the people of Turkey identified, failed to replace it with a new, modern image, one that would appeal to the general public. The ideal image that was proposed with the reforms was one that was constructed by the ruling elite, without much support from the general public. The absence of the mirror to which the Venetian eludes thus implies the lack of an ideal mirror image during the Turkish experience of modernity, which for Tanpınar is the major reason for a belated and 'lacking' experience of modernity. Tanpınar contends that an ideal 'self' is needed in order to reach an authentic definition of Turkish identity. What makes the Western experience exemplary for Tanpınar is the presence of an ideal definition of the 'self' with

which identification is possible. According to Tanpınar an authentic Turkish identity can only be achieved by the creation of an ideal ‘self’, which is obtained by a synthesis of the Western and Eastern qualities:

He believed that a literature which is neither ‘wretched’ nor rootless, neither ‘funny’ nor derivative, neither ‘primitive’ nor imitative, which has both a ‘human warmth’ and a ‘horizon’ will be the result of an original synthesis of native characteristics and European ideals. Tanpınar’s every suggestion toward this objective starts with the word *self*: We needed to ‘go back to ourselves,’ go back to our own past, go back to our own cultural wealth. In order to create a literature organically ours, we had to ‘be our own selves’. (Gürbilek, 2003: 602)

The Venetian’s reference to the prominent role accorded to the mirror in the West thus echoes Tanpınar’s position that advocates for an ideal image of ‘self’ in order to define an authentic Turkish identity. Pamuk, on the other hand, problematizes the definition of an ideal mirror image and instead proposes a mirror image that is always already fragmented and multiple. Thus for Pamuk identification is not a linear development working towards an ideal totalizing definition of the ‘self’ but rather is a perpetual displacement resulting from the various representations that emerge as multiple mirror images. The mirror scene that I will discuss in the following pages will substantiate Pamuk’s perspective.

Hoja adopts a condescending attitude towards the Venetian’s comment about the use of the mirror. This reaction upsets the Venetian who accuses Hoja of cowardice: ‘... I declared that only he could discover who he was, but he wasn’t man enough to try.’ (Pamuk, 2001: 50) The Venetian’s provocations eventually lead to the writing process as Hoja forces him to be the brave one and write down ‘what he is’. Writing here is not an attempt to record but symbolizes a process of representation, as the Venetian is trying to define his ‘self’.

The Venetian, in his attempt to find ‘what he is’ starts writing about his childhood. The reason behind his choice is not very clear although he explains it as follows:

I didn't know just why I chose to write about these memories in particular as a way of discovering why I was who I was; perhaps I was prompted by the longing I must have felt for the happiness of that life I'd lost; and Hoja had so pressed me after what I'd said in anger that I was obliged, just as I am now, *to dream up something my reader would find believable and to try to make the details enjoyable.* (Pamuk, 2001: 51, *my emphasis*)

Unable to differentiate himself due to the alleged physical similarity between the two men, the Venetian resorts to his childhood memories in order to establish himself as distinct from Hoja. For the Venetian the memories, however, are not ‘facts’ that would restore an originary definition of his ‘self’ but rather are components of a pleasant story. It is pivotal to note that it is while writing down his childhood memories in order to define ‘what he is’ that the Venetian refers to a story with fictional elements. Thus not only, he undermines the binary juxtaposition of memory with fiction but also establishes a parallel between the creation of a story and the definition of ‘what he is’. The Venetian obtains the definition of ‘what he is’ not by looking for an essential and originary meaning in his past but rather by representing himself in a story that is composed with his childhood memories. Thus the process of remembering for him is a process of representation where he composes a story with his memories. The story that he writes is the definition of ‘what he is’ not because of the presence of ‘factual’ memories but because it represents him as ‘an-other’.

The possibility of fiction is not limited to the Venetian’s childhood memories but gains significance on the broader definition of memory as history. The events of the past do not contain an inherent truth that needs to be restored

through remembering, rather as Homi Bhabha notes, it is their recording through representation that assigns them with different meanings.

The sign of history does not consist in an essence of the event itself, nor exclusively in the *immediate consciousness* of its agents and actors but in its form as a *spectacle*; spectacle that signifies *because* of the distanciation and displacement between the event and those who are its spectators. (Bhabha, 2010: 348)

The different representations of the event assign it with distinct meaning through ‘distanciation and displacement’. Each representation of the event would involve its repetition, which would inevitably introduce the possibility of fiction. Remembering the event would thus involve repeating it, thus resulting in its representation as ‘distanciation and displacement’. Derrida, in *Demeure*, underlines the implication of repetition in relation to the possibility of testimony. He contends that a testimony, which attests to the singularity of an instant, is only possible as repetition.

What I say for the first time, if it is a testimony, is already a repetition, at least a repeatability; it is already an iterability, more than once at once, more than an instant in one instant, at the same time; and that being the case, the instant is always divided at its very point, at the point of its writing. (Derrida, 2000: 41)

The possibility or the obligation to repeat is what constitutes the fictional aspect of the Venetian’s memories, which far from being in opposition to the ‘factual’ presentation of memories emerges as the only possible way to represent. The Venetian’s representation of his childhood memories in the story that he composes brings to the foreground the effect of *différance*, which while on the one hand abolishing all claims to a pure ‘origin’ on the other disseminates meaning through repetition. The fictional nature of the Venetian’s memories unfolds the inherent connection between fiction and all claims to autobiography.

And it is perhaps here, with the technological both as ideality and prosthetic iterability, that the possibility of fiction *and* lie, simulacrum itself, at the very origin of truthful testimony, autobiography in good faith, sincere confession, as their essential compossibility. (Derrida, 2000: 42)

The story that the Venetian tells provides the answer to ‘why am I what I am?’ by representing him as ‘an-other’ in that story. Just like memories, the definition of the Venetian’s identity is only possible through its repetition as representation where with the possibility of fiction it will be re-invented as ‘an-other’. In the stories that he composes the Venetian can re-invent his ‘self’ by creating a new ‘I’ with which to identify. The representation of the Venetian’s ‘self’ in the stories that he creates not only portrays the impossibility of restoring an originary and authentic definition but also shows that representation as repetition provides the only possible definition as ‘distanciation and displacement’ of meaning as *différance*.

Recognizing Hoja’s pleasure in reading his childhood memories, the Venetian decides to include him in this process. He thus anticipates going back to his lazy days once Hoja is captivated by this new fascination, however, things do not go as the Venetian planned because Hoja wants them to sit together to write about their childhood memories.

He said we must sit at the two ends of the table and write facing one another: our minds, confronted by these dangerous subjects, would drift, trying to escape, and only in this way would we start on the path, only in this way could we strengthen each other with the spirit of discipline. (Pamuk, 2001: 52)

Hoja wants them to sit together at the two ends of the table. He proposes this method to generate a better working environment for them both. This scene where the two men sit at the two ends of the table, however, is not merely about

creating discipline for their work but rather aims to restore the binary positions of the Venetian and Hoja as each other's opposites. Hoja's desire to obtain an essential definition to 'what he is' is disrupted by the writing process, allowing a multiplicity of definitions which rather than restoring an originary definition further displace meaning through repetition. It is by sitting at the two ends of the table that Hoja aims to restore the metaphysical dichotomies in hopes of reaching an originary and unique definition of 'what he is'.

Their physical similarity transforms their sitting arrangement into a mirror scene where both the Venetian and Hoja operate as each other's mirror image. Unlike the writing process, which would lead to multiple representations of the 'self', by sitting facing one another, Hoja aims to restore a singular ideal mirror image with which he can identify. Hoja thus strives to eliminate the multiplicity of representations that would lead to a dissemination of meaning, depriving him of the singular and originary definition of 'what he is'. Only by sitting across the Venetian he can restore his mirror image as the source of alterity through which he can reach a definition of his self. The presence of the 'other' as a mirror image that represents an ideal state of homogenous unity and singularity facilitates the writing process because it is in aspiration to this image that they both create their stories. Writing facing that 'other', facilitates the creation of 'what they are' as identification with that ideal and singular mirror image. They thus try to control the multiplicity of representations that the writing process may generate, obliterating the definition of a singular self. As Homi Bhabha remarks, however, identification is not a predetermined process but one that is marked by uncertainty:

Finally, the question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a *self*-fulfilling prophecy – it is always the

production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image. The demand of identification – that, to be *for* an Other – entails the representation of the subject in the differentiating order of otherness. Identification, as we inferred from the preceding illustrations, is always the return of an image of identity that bears the mark of splitting in the Other place from which it comes. For Fanon, like Lacan, the primary moments of such a repetition of the self lie in the desire to look and the limits of language. The ‘atmosphere of certain uncertainty’ that surrounds the body certifies its existence and threatens its dismemberment. (Bhabha, 2010: 64)

The unpredictable nature of identification, made explicit by Bhabha, highlights the impossibility of reaching a totalizing definition of the self. In the case of the Venetian and Hoja, it is not the sitting arrangements that would allow identification by providing a singular ideal image but rather the writing of their childhood memories, which would enable dissemination of meaning by providing them with multiple representations of their selves.

Jale Parla, focusing on the creative aspect of this unusual scene, observes that *The White Castle* is the only doppelgänger narrative where the twins work together to create:

In the Western literary tradition creativity is always depicted as a lonely and private process. The twin of the writer is considered not to be an aid but a destroyer; the writer creates *despite his twin*. However in *The White Castle* they always sit together at the table: whether it is the good, the bad or the gun or the story, the Venetian and Hoja create together. With all the torture and pain, they exemplify a perfect collaboration. (Parla, 2006a: 90, *my translation*)

Their sitting together enhances creativity in the sense that the Venetian and Hoja create stories that re-invent themselves. In conflict with Hoja’s desire to reach an originary and singular definition of ‘what he is’ the representation of their selves through stories emerges as the only definition as dissemination.

The writing process appears as an extension of the mirror imagery not only because of their sitting arrangements but also because of the analogy that

Hoja establishes between writing and the mirror. By writing down his childhood memories Hoja aims to look inside his head in the same way that he can look at his own face in the mirror.

He had nothing in mind but that analogy: just as a person could view his external self in the mirror, he should be able to observe the interior of his mind in his thoughts. (Pamuk, 2001: 55)

Hoja's preoccupation with the mirror indicates his desire to restore an ideal mirror image that would provide him with closure. He wishes to re-establish the unity of the ideal mirror image, which is destroyed with the emergence of the Venetian.

Not only the setting in which they write but also the content of their writings, play an important role in reflecting the conventional criteria of defining identity. Their decision to write down their childhood memories in order to define their identities reflects a desire to reach an origin, a genesis story that would provide them with a legitimate and originary source for their identities. These childhood stories appear as representations of the process of writing history; they aim to excavate personal histories. In other words the personal and accidental histories of the two protagonists establish a parallel with the historical setting of the narrative. Notwithstanding the historical setting of his narrative, Pamuk does not introduce any historical facts. Through his fictional characters he offers an alternative history that is composed of individual narratives. Antagonistic towards a definition of history that is universal, all encompassing and that adopts a singular point of view, Pamuk proposes the fragmented, multiple and individual narratives of the Venetian and Hoja, which are open to the possibility of fiction. History, just like the stories of the Venetian and Hoja, acquires its significance in its different representations.

Within the discourse of the nation-states, history writing reflects an attempt to define a pure origin that would provide a legitimate source for the discourse of the newly emerging nation. In both literary and historical narratives, this desire for a genesis has become an indispensable part of the definition of identity. Murat Belge in his *Genesis* discusses the links to essentialism and analyses different works of Turkish literature where this longing for an originary mythology becomes explicit. Belge draws attention to the multiplicity of discourses that have prevailed before and after the foundation of the Turkish Republic. He notes that although an Islam-centred approach was more popular during the pre-republican era, it has been replaced by a multiplicity of approaches after the establishment of the republic, including a mythology that was based on the Turkic settlers in central Asia and others that considered the Turkification of Anatolia as the original source of an authentic Turkish identity. What is common to all these attempts to return to an origin is the inevitable involvement of fiction. Because as Žižek very rightly notes, ‘the ‘return to’ constitutes the very object to which it returns: in the very act of returning to tradition, they are inventing it’ (Žižek, 2006: 29).

If the Venetian and Hoja symbolize the West and the East respectively, they are both immersed in this writing activity in order to find their ‘essence within their thoughts’ (Pamuk, 2001: 55); that is to say they try to present their histories which they believe would be singular to them. Their personal anecdotes, however, rather than providing them with singular stories that would function as proof of a singular identity, exhibit the similarities between all lives.³⁵ The Venetian openly states that there is nothing distinguishable about those anecdotes:

³⁵ The similarity between all lives is an important point to which the sultan of *The White Castle* will also draw attention.

how I suddenly came face to face with a bear on a hunting expedition in the Alps with my father and brothers, and we'd stood still staring at one another for a long time, or how I'd felt at the deathbed of our beloved coachman who was trampled by his own horses before our eyes: *anyone could write these things*. (Pamuk, 2001: 51, *my emphasis*)

These incidents that supposedly belong to the Venetian's childhood memories constitute his personal history. Yet as he also acknowledges there is nothing specific in these anecdotes that would provide him with an answer to 'what he is'. The writing of their personal memories does not provide the Venetian and Hoja with an ordinary definition of 'what they are' but instead displays the impossibility of an inherent meaning that these events contain. The childhood memories, the events that Hoja and the Venetian remember do not possess an essential meaning in themselves, but are assigned different meanings through their different representations in each story that they construct. It is the repetition of the memories by the Venetian and Hoja in order to obtain a story about 'what they are' that provides those otherwise insignificant events with meaning. The anecdotes the Venetian tells gain significance as they emerge to be inevitable stories belonging to his experience; it is not the events in themselves but rather the Venetian's placing of those events within a story that assigns them with significance.

Inspired by the Venetian, Hoja too joins him in this writing process. His childhood anecdotes not only give away his real name but also operate as a litmus test that would unravel the element of fiction within his story.

His grandfather would tell them stories. Hoja loved those stories, but loved the hospital more and would run off to wander through its courtyards and halls. On one visit he listened to music being played for the mental patients, under the lantern of a great dome; there was also the sound of water, flowing water; he'd wander through other rooms where strange, colourful bottles and jars shone brightly;

another time he lost his way, started to cry, and they'd taken him to every room in the whole hospital one by one before finding his grandfather Abdullah Efendi's room; sometimes his mother cried, sometimes she listened with her daughter to the old man's stories. Then they'd leave with the empty pot grandfather had given back to them, but before they reached the house his mother would buy them halva and whisper, 'Let's eat it before anyone sees us.' (Pamuk, 2001: 68)

Later on, during the sultan's campaign into the Balkans, the Venetian decides to check the accuracy of this story as they are stationed near Edirne, the town where the hospital in question is. To the Venetian's disappointment however, the details of Hoja's story do not correspond to what he sees:

Perhaps because I was mistaken in thinking Hoja and his mother would have taken the quickest way, I couldn't find the short road shaded by poplar trees that led to the bridge; I did find a poplar-lined road, but there was no river near it where they might have rested eating halva so long ago. And at the hospital there were none of the things I'd imagined,³⁶ it was not muddy but perfectly clean, there was no sound of running water, nor coloured bottles. When I saw a patient in chains I couldn't resist asking a doctor about him: he had fallen in love, gone mad, and believed he was someone else like most madmen; he would have told me more, but I left. (Pamuk, 2001: 114)

The Venetian's visit to the actual place where Hoja's story had taken place confirms the possibility of fiction. This acknowledgment not only puts an end to the earlier speculations but also offers a possible answer to 'Why am I what I am?' as it is through these 'stories' that Hoja invents himself. Regardless of the accuracy of the events described, Hoja's story makes him 'what he is' by representing him as 'an-other' within that story.

³⁶ There is significant information that is lost in translation here. In the Turkish original the narrator is saying, *düşlediklerimiz*, which in English would be 'we imaged'. The narrator is explicitly stating that he was not the only one doing the imagination but it was 'we', Hoja and him together. The Venetian refers to Hoja's childhood memories as something that he and Hoja had imagined together thus implying that this story is the product of their imagination together. This piece of information insinuates that the Venetian and Hoja may constitute the 'self' and the 'other' of the same 'I'. I will develop this postulation further in the following pages.

The stories that the Venetian and Hoja compose with their childhood memories display that, neither the events nor the Venetian and Hoja's identities possess an originary truth that needs to be restored. The representation of the memories, of Hoja and the Venetian defines them by re-inventing them as 'another'. The memories as they are repeated within the story become 'another' with the possibility of fiction in the same way that Hoja and the Venetian become 'what they are' by emerging as 'another' within the stories they create. As the fantasy of an ideal unified mirror image dissolves in the writing process, Hoja becomes 'what he is' through his representation as 'another'. The Venetian confirms this transformation: 'I could enjoy watching him become someone else' (Pamuk, 2001: 57).

The writing process is disrupted with the plague outbreak, which operates as another level where Hoja tries to restore the metaphysical binaries in order to define himself in opposition with the Venetian. Hoja with his fatalist attitude adopts the identity of the Oriental whose courage derives from his ignorance whereas the Venetian is depicted, in contrast to Hoja, as the rational Westerner who follows scientific evidence and takes measures accordingly. For example, the Venetian, knowing that the disease is contagious, makes an effort to minimize all human contact. While the Venetian shuts himself indoors and avoids all human contact, Hoja continues his daily life with the calmness that is generated with his fatalist approach resulting from his ignorance. Hoja believes that the disease needs to be received with solemnity as he considers it God's wish. The difference in their attitudes echoes the sitting arrangement where Hoja wishes to restore a binary definition of himself in contrast to the Venetian. This metaphysical perspective through which the Venetian and Hoja are portrayed far from hinting at

Pamuk's Orientalist tendencies, displays the invalidity of such categories. Once the Venetian discovers a pustule on his body, the contrasting definition of the two men becomes invalid, just like the failure of their sitting arrangement that failed to provide them with an originary definition of 'what they are'.

As Bayrakçeken and Randall affirm, the fear caused by the plague not only challenges the Venetian and Hoja's perceptions of each other but also forces them to reconsider their wish to emerge as distinct individuals.

With plague fears now providing the main point of orientation for their view of themselves and each other, Turkish master and European slave undergo the first real breakdown of each one's claim to a distinct personal and cultural identity. (Bayrakçeken and Randall, 2005: 194)

Since the moment they had met, both men have been eager to vindicate their individual identity in contrast with the other. The fear that they both experience in front of the plague, however, obliterates these attempts that aimed to provide an originary definition of 'what they are' that would set the two men apart. The impossibility of an essential definition of their 'self' is made explicit with the scene in front of the mirror that obliterates the fantasy of a unified and ideal mirror image.

Squeezing the nape of my neck from both sides with his fingers, he pulled me towards him. 'Come let us look in the mirror together.' I looked, and under the raw light of the lamp saw once more how much we resembled one another. I recalled how I'd been overwhelmed by this when I'd first seen him as I waited at Sadik Pasha's door. *At that time I had seen someone I must be; and now I thought he too must be someone like me. The two of us were one person!* This now seemed to me an obvious truth. It was as if I were bound fast, my hands tied, unable to budge. I made a movement to save myself, as if to verify that I was myself. I quickly ran my hands through my hair. *But he imitated my gesture and did it perfectly, without disturbing the symmetry of the mirror image at all.* He also imitated my look, the attitude of my head, he mimicked my terror I could not endure to see in the mirror but from which, transfixed by fear, I could not tear my eyes away; then he was gleeful like a child who teases a friend by mimicking his words and movements. (Pamuk, 2001: 71, *my emphasis*)

This uncanny scene³⁷ marks a critical moment for the narrative as well as for the Venetian and Hoja in their attempt to define ‘what they are’. The ideal mirror image that Hoja wished to establish by their sitting arrangements thus dissolves with this scene where the mirror image appears as multiple. The multiplicity of representations that was hinted at with the stories they constructed with their childhood memories, thus gains visibility as the multiple mirror images. The two images that are reflected in the mirror indicates that the ideal Lacanian mirror image of identification is always already multiple, thus redefining identification as displacement. The multiplicity of images reflected in the mirror, obliterate the definition of identification as a linear progressive development aimed at closure as the manifestation of an originary and singular definition of the ‘self’ by displaying the always already multiple and fragmented constitution of the mirror image.

The exclamation of the narrator ‘The two us were one person!’ not only provides clues regarding the plotline of the narrative but also displays Pamuk’s definition of the ‘self’ as always already multiple and fragmented. The two images reflected in the mirror are thus the two distinct representations of the same ‘self’, which will become evident in the final chapter of *The White Castle*. As I will discuss in details the Venetian and Hoja will emerge as the representations of the writer of the book, who has re-invented himself as ‘an-other’, the Venetian, through the ‘I’ of his story. This multiplicity is not restricted to the identity of the narrator of the final chapter but is the only possible way to define identity as such.

³⁷ It is important to note that a similar scene in front of the mirror will also appear in *Istanbul: Memories of a City*.

In addition to the stories that the Venetian and Hoja compose where they define 'what they are' through the various representations of their 'selves' as 'an-other', the mirror scene displays the impossibility of a singular ideal mirror image. The multiple mirror images are the various representations that the 'self' composes in order to define 'what he is'. This process is not a linear progress that aims to reach a reconciliatory identification with one ideal mirror image, but rather is a process of permanent displacement where each representation will further disseminate meaning, thus never reaching closure.

Unlike Tanpinar who traced the origins of the fragmented mirror image to a prior origin that was total and intact, for Pamuk the mirror image is always already multiple and fragmented. The multiplicity, for Pamuk, is not an incident that happens to a prior unity but is always already there as the only possible form of representation. All attempts to represent inevitably involve signs and thus repeat its object not as the 'same' but as multiplicity; it is through this repetition of the same as *différance* that meaning as such becomes possible. Thus rather than establishing a hierarchy where multiplicity is favoured over singularity, Pamuk suggests that the constant repetition as difference and deferral is the only possible way of representation. The representation of the Venetian and Hoja's identities are only possible through their representation as 'an-other' which would enable identification not as a final closure but as dissemination of meaning.

Another important point regarding this scene is the significant role of the image. The Venetian and Hoja are invited to define themselves in relation with the image in the mirror, which illustrates heterogeneity and multiplicity rather than the purity of an ideal fantasy. As Bhabha notes, the image marks absence and therefore emerges as the space of ambivalence rather than approval.

For the image – as point of identification – marks the site of ambivalence. Its representation is always spatially split – it makes *present* something that is *absent* – and temporally deferred: it is the representation of a time that is always elsewhere, a repetition. The image is only ever an *appurtenance* to authority and identity; it must never be read mimetically as the appearance of a reality... The image is at once a metaphoric substitution, an illusion of presence, and by that same token a metonym, a sign of its absence and loss. (Bhabha, 2010: 73)

The inability to reach a final decision regarding the identity of the narrator of *The White Castle* is displayed in the ambivalence of the image. The multiple mirror images not only obliterate the possibility of an eventual identification but also point to ambivalence as the only possible way to define identity. Identification for Pamuk is the constant displacement among the various representations of the ‘self’ as ‘an-other’ and that is why the multiple images reflected in the mirror prevent the designation of the identity of the narrator, instead creating an ambiguity through which dissemination of meaning is constantly at play.

Not only the mirror but also the fear that they experience with the plague outbreak invites the Venetian and Hoja to experience their ‘self’ as ‘an-other’.

‘Now I am like you,’ he said. ‘I know your fear. I have become you!’... He declared he could now say things he couldn’t before because he had not been able to see them, but I thought he was mistaken: the words were the same, and so were the objects. The only thing new was his fear; no, not that either; *the form³⁸ of his experience of it*; but it seemed to me that even this, which I cannot clearly describe now, was something he put on in front of the mirror, a new trick of his. (Pamuk, 2001: 72, *my emphasis*)

Hoja’s experience of fear is similar to the experience of his ‘self’, the fear in itself does not carry an essential meaning but becomes available through the different forms that it takes; it is the different experiences of fear that, by

³⁸ The word used in the Turkish original is *biçim*. It connotes form in general, in a work of art and within philosophy it designates the Platonic form. Thus the word *biçim* echoes within the metaphysical form/meaning binary.

providing distinct representations, make it ‘what it is’. The link between the ‘self’ and fear is established with the use of the word ‘form’ which connotes the platonic dichotomy that privileges meaning over form; within the metaphysical tradition the ideal meaning is only derivatively related to the ideal meaning that exists independent of formal representation. For Pamuk, however, forms are the only possible way to produce meaning, which provide different representations that lead to a permanent displacement where no meaning can be defined in fixed terms. Hoja’s experience of fear is one of the various other representations of it that contribute to the definition of ‘what it is’.

Hoja realizes following the mirror scene that what makes him ‘what he is’ is not an essential quality that needs to be restored; as the multiple images in the mirror portrayed the different representations of his ‘self’ as ‘an-other’ provide Hoja with the ambiguous space that offers a definition of ‘what he is’ as perpetual displacement. As a result Hoja decides to be ‘an-other’ by exchanging identities with the Venetian:

He was going to take my place, I his, and to accomplish this it would be enough for us to exchange clothes and for him to cut his beard while I left mine to grow, this thought made our resemblance in the mirror even more horrible, and my nerves grew taut as I heard him say that I would then make a freedman of him: he spoke exultantly of what he would do when he returned to my country in my place. I was terrified to realize he remembered everything I had told him, about my childhood and youth, down to the smallest detail, and *from these details had constructed an odd and fantastical land to his own taste*. My life was beyond my control, it was being dragged elsewhere in his hands, and I felt there was nothing for me to do but passively watch what happened to me from the outside, *as if I were dreaming*. But the trip he was going to make to my country as me and the life he was going to live there had a strangeness and naïveté that prevented me from believing it completely. At the same time *I was surprised by the logic in the details of his fantasy: I felt like saying that this too could have been, my life could have been lived like this*. (Pamuk, 2001: 72, *my emphasis*)

Hoja is no longer looking for an inherent definition of ‘what he is’ by trying to establish binary positions for him and the Venetian. He ‘literally’ tries to be ‘an-other’ by taking on the Venetian’s identity. Although their physical appearances facilitate this exchange, it is with the story that he constructs that Hoja can obtain a representation of his ‘self’ as ‘an-other’.

Using the memories that figures in the Venetian’s childhood anecdotes Hoja reconstructs a new narrative as his life story. His reconstruction echoes the process of remembering in the sense that it makes explicit the possibility of fiction; using the same elements Hoja composes a story that is similar yet distinct from the Venetian’s life story. The narrative that Hoja recreates with the elements of the Venetian’s memories is one that is similar to the Venetian’s version. As is the case with all representation, the repetition of the elements that initially appeared as belonging to the Venetian, does not result in the reproduction of the same, but a new narrative that is similar yet different emerges. The new story that is constructed portrays not only the impossibility of the Venetian’s story to have an inherent original meaning but also indicates how the definition of Hoja’s identity depends on the different texts through which he re-invents himself as ‘an-other’. Thus neither the story nor their identities are sources of an originary and essential meaning but acquire their significance through their representations that enable the dissemination of meaning. The story that Hoja composes thus does not emerge as the copy of the original but as one of the many possible representations. In the same way Hoja’s identity, represented through the story he creates, becomes a representation of ‘what he is’ by offering him a re-invention of his ‘self’ as ‘an-other’. The different representations of his ‘self’ provide Hoja with

various mirror images with which he can identify because ‘what he is’ can only be defined through an endless non-linear process of identification. As Derrida states:

Whatever the story of a return to oneself or to *one's home* [chez-soi], into the “hut” [“case”] of one’s home (*chez* is the *casa*), no matter what an odyssey or bildungsroman it might be, in whatever manner one invents the story of a construction of the *self*, the *autos*, or the *ipse*, it is always *imagined* that the one who writes should know how to say *I*. (Derrida, 1998a: 28)

No only Hoja, but the Venetian too joins the process of representing himself as ‘an-other’ following the mirror scene where the impossibility of a singular and ideal definition was undermined. During the festivities organized to celebrate the end of the plague while watching Hoja from a distance the Venetian sees Hoja as his ‘self’. Their physical similarity allows Hoja to appear as ‘an-other’ Venetian, thus providing the Venetian with a representation of his ‘self’. While Hoja is standing closer to the sultan, the Venetian watches from a distance, seeing not Hoja but *himself*.

It wasn’t that I wished to seize a share in the triumph or to receive a reward for what I had done; the feeling I had was quite different: I should be by his side, *I was Hoja's very self!* I had become separated from *my real self* and was seeing *myself from the outside*, just as in the nightmares I often had. I didn’t even want to learn the identity of this other person I was inside of; I only wanted, while I fearfully watched *my self* pass by without recognizing me, to rejoin him as soon as I could. (Pamuk, 2001: 86, *my emphasis*)

The Venetian looking at Hoja recognizes himself just like Hoja who had claimed that he was the Venetian when they were standing in front of the mirror together. Hoja emerges as ‘an-other’ representation of the Venetian thus providing an insight into ‘what he is’. For the Venetian, Hoja no longer represents an alterity but rather emerges as ‘an-other’ representation of his ‘self’.

Alongside the mirror, dreams³⁹ too offer a similar experience of the representation of the ‘self’ as ‘an-other’. Dreams offer both the visual experience of the mirror as well as the textual aspect of the story by reproducing the ‘self’ in a new narrative. In a dream, a ‘self’ can see his or her own image as ‘an-other’, as is the case with a mirror image, while also being part of a story where that ‘self’ is re-invented. According to Lacan dreams function like language in the sense that the images in a dream need to be read like words on a page. Following Freud, Lacan claims that ‘the dream is a rebus’ (Lacan, 2006: 176) and that the ‘linguistic structure that enables us to read dreams is the very principle of the ‘significance of the dream’’ (Lacan, 2006: 176). The parallel that Lacan establishes between language and dreams enable yet another parallel between dreams and stories in the sense that both provide a space where the ‘self’ can be represented as ‘an-other’ thus allowing the definition of the ‘self’ as displacement.

The first dream that the Venetian recounts, is very striking not only because it is prophetic of the plot of *The White Castle* but also because it allows the Venetian to see himself as ‘an-other’.

In my discretion those days I had told him of a dream I’d had: he had gone to my country in my place, was marrying my fiancée, at the wedding no one realized that he was not me, and during the festivities which I watched from a corner dressed as a Turk, I met up with my mother and fiancée who both turned their backs on me without recognizing who I was despite the tears which finally wakened me from the dream. (Pamuk, 2001: 35)

The dream visually echoes the mirror scene where the Venetian and Hoja were standing together in front of the mirror, looking at their own reflection. Similarly the Venetian in his dream is looking both at his own image and Hoja

³⁹ It is important to note that dreams also play a highly significant role in Tapınar’s oeuvre. The significant role dreams play in *The White Castle* further emphasizes the link with Tapınar’s *The Dreams of Abdullah Effendi*.

who appears to have taken his place. The Venetian sees two images that both appear to be his 'self'. The dream thus provides him with two distinct mirror images that represent his 'self' as 'an-other'. The dream, similar to the mirror, displays the always already multiple constitution of his 'self'. Rather than presenting a unique ideal mirror image with which he can identify in order to obtain a definition of 'what he is', the Venetian's dream displays the multiple images that constitute his 'self' through a process of identification as displacement.

The Venetian's dreams gain a wider scope when he starts frequenting the palace during Hoja's absence. While Hoja is busy with the construction of his deadly weapon, the Venetian goes to the palace to entertain the sultan. One of the main activities during these visits consists of the Venetian telling the sultan about his dreams. The sultan, very pleased with his skills as a storyteller, wishes to hear more of the Venetian's dreams.

I regaled him with dreams. I can't tell now whether these stories, most of which I have come to believe myself after repeating them so often, were things I actually experienced in my youth or visions which flowed from my pen every time I sat down at the table to write my book; sometimes I'd throw in a couple of amusing falsehoods which sprang to mind... and told stories that I wasn't sure were from memories or my dreams. But there were also things I had still not been able to forget after twenty-five years, things that were real... These were the details which least interested the sultan. He had said to me once that basically every life was like another... While I looked apprehensively into his face, I felt an impulse to say 'I am I'. (Pamuk, 2001: 108)

The stories that the Venetian tells the sultan are composed of various elements that include real anecdotes, dreams as well as falsehoods. The distinction between the different elements of the stories far from aiming to differentiate one from another undermines the validity of such categories. Far from defining the 'real' and 'fictional' ones in a hierarchy where the real anecdotes are given a

higher status, the Venetian creates stories where each of these elements is represented as ‘an-other’. As was the case with their childhood memories, the elements that compose the stories do not contain an inherent and originary meaning. Once these various elements are represented within the Venetian’s story they are re-invented as ‘an-other’; it is only then that they are assigned different meanings as part of the Venetian’s story.

The sultan’s reaction to the stories is indicative of Pamuk’s position as he shows his disinterest for the element of ‘real’ in the stories. By stating that ‘every life was like another’ (Pamuk, 2001: 109) the sultan underlines the fact there are no essential qualities that would make a life different from another. The sultan’s viewpoint also undermines Hoja’s initial desire to determine the essential attributes that would make him singular and different from the Venetian. As the failure of those attempts and the multiple images revealed in the mirror scene had illustrated, there are no such elements that are inherently linked to Hoja’s definition of his ‘self’. It is only the different forms in which he represents himself that Hoja can define ‘what he is’ as a perpetual dissemination of meaning. In each story that he tells, Hoja emerges as another ‘I’ thus exemplifying the limitless possibilities that prevail to define ‘what he is’.

In response to the sultan’s comments the Venetian feels the need to assert his identity as distinct, which he expresses with the desire to state ‘I am I’. The Venetian’s statement is an indication of his yearning to mark his ‘singular’ identity as well as a confirmation of Pamuk’s argument. With the statement ‘I am I’ the Venetian aims to express his distinct position from all the other ‘I’s by determining an essential element that would make him singular, yet it is with that exclamation that he emerges as ‘what he is’. As soon as the Venetian says ‘I’ he

incorporates language; he represents himself through a sign. Through the pronoun 'I' he represents his 'self' as 'an-other' thus creating a definition of 'what he is'. His representation in language through the pronoun 'I' provides the Venetian with one of the various possible representations of his 'self' that make him 'what he is'. Ironically it is when he is trying to define himself as the possessor of an inherent unique meaning that the Venetian provides the only possible definition of 'what he is' through his re-invention as 'an-other'.

The sultan's presence in the narrative is far from being a stylistic detail as he plays a very significant role in unravelling important aspects of the relation between the Venetian and Hoja. In addition to his lack of interest in the 'real' details of the Venetian's story, the sultan emerges as a key figure, with his ability to distinguish between the Venetian and Hoja.

Like an attentive father who separates two brothers arguing over their marbles, saying 'this one is yours, and this one is yours', he disentangled us with his observations about our speech and behaviour. These observations, which I found sometimes childish and sometimes clever, started to worry me: I began to believe that my personality had split itself off from me and united with Hoja's and vice versa, without our perceiving it, and that the sultan, by evaluating this imaginary creature, had come to know us better than we knew ourselves. (Pamuk, 2001: 102)

The sultan's effortless in distinguishing the two men appears startling compared with the emphasis that was brought to their similarity at the beginning of the narrative. Nevertheless it is crucial to note the criteria that the sultan uses to make such a distinction; rather than mentioning their physical appearance, the sultan prefers to use their 'speech and behaviour' in order to differentiate between the Venetian and Hoja. The sultan's choice hints at the significant role of the stories that he had heard from the Venetian. The stories by representing the Venetian and Hoja had provided the sultan with an insight into the elements that

made them ‘what they are’. Unlike their nationality, name or physical appearances which fail to differentiate between the Venetian and Hoja, the stories where they re-invent their ‘selves’ as ‘an-other’ allow the sultan to identify the Venetian and Hoja. The stories as the space of displacement thus emerge as the only possible way to represent the identities of the Venetian and Hoja, defining ‘what they are’.

While explaining the ease with which the sultan distinguishes between them, the narrator’s words hint at the possibility of there being one person instead of two. He suggests that this new ‘creature’ is created by the bringing together of the Venetian and Hoja and the sultan distinguished between them by ‘disentangling’ that ‘creature’. This implication reverberates in relation with the final chapter of the narrative where the unidentifiable narrator will acknowledge his authorship of the story, indicating that the story is a representation of ‘what he is’ as ‘an-other’.

The use of the word ‘creature’ is not limited to the narrator but also appears as the name given to the weapon that Hoja is trying to devise. Unable to name the amorphous shape of the weapon, the Venetian refers to it as a ‘creature’:

Even four years later, when that little stain had been transformed into a bizarre *creature*⁴⁰ as tall as a grand mosque, a terrifying apparition which all Istanbul talked about and Hoja called a real machine of war, and while everyone likened it to one thing or another, I was still lost in the details of what Hoja had told me in the past about how the weapon would triumph in the future. (Pamuk, 2001: 106, *my emphasis*)

This analogy suggests that the ‘creature’ that Hoja is working on is what the sultan could see when he was differentiating between the Venetian and Hoja; a ‘self’ that is represented as different ‘others’. This ‘creature’ is the unidentifiable identity of the narrator of *The White Castle* who is represented through the

⁴⁰ In the Turkish original too the same word, *yaratık*, is repeated.

Venetian and Hoja. The numerous reflections in the mirror thus reflect the always already multiple constitution of the narrator's identity which can only be defined through its representations which re-invent it as 'an-other'. The inability to identify the narrator following the alleged exchange in the penultimate chapter indicates that the definition of identity is only possible in the ambiguous zone that is obtained through representation as displacement.

Furthermore Hoja points to the mirror scene as the originary moment that inspired him for the invention of the weapon, which implies that the multiple reflections in the mirror belong to the 'creature' that is the ambiguous identity of the narrator.

He spoke of a great truth he'd perceived during the days of the plague when we had contemplated ourselves in the mirror together: now all of it had achieved clarity in his mind, you see, the weapon had its genesis in this moment of truth! (Pamuk, 2001: 106)

The mirror scene operates as the 'moment of truth' as it made evident the impossibility to identify with an ideal unified mirror image, both because the mirror image is always already multiple and also because identification with those multiple images would far from resulting in a closure, would enable further dissemination. The multiplicity of images, displayed in the mirror obliterating the fantasy of a unique ideal image, indicate uncertainty and displacement as the only possible way to define the elements that made the 'I' of *The White Castle* 'what he is'.

The analogy between the 'creature' that is the weapon that Hoja builds and the 'imaginary creature' that the sultan perceives when looking at the Venetian and Hoja, highlights the implication of 'invention' in the construction of both. It is not only the war machine that is being 'invented' but also the identity of the

narrator; the different representations of the narrator, as the Venetian and Hoja, ‘invent’ his identity as ‘an-other’. The stories that make the narrator ‘what he is’ are invented just like the machine that Hoja invents; Derrida notes the parallel between machines and stories and how they constitute the only possible registers of invention:

On the one hand, people invent *stories* (fictional or fabulous), and on the other hand, they invent *machines*, technical devices or mechanism, in the broadest sense of the word. Someone may invent by fabulation, by producing narratives to which there is no corresponding reality outside the narrative (an alibi, for example), or else one may invent by producing a new operational possibility... There, I would say, for the moment, in a somewhat elliptical and dogmatic fashion, are the only two possible, and rigorously specific registers of all invention today. (Derrida, 2007: 10)

The White Castle combines these two registers by showing how the stories that the narrator invents to define his ‘self’ also emerge as the weapon that Hoja invents to fight against ‘the white castle’ which is the symbol of a pure, intact and homogenous definition of identity. The invention of identity as displacement is the invention of a weapon that would undermine the definition of identity as ‘the white castle’.

The white castle, which also gives the narrative its title, is a highly symbolic *construction*. The white castle is the Doppio Castle,⁴¹ which the sultan aims to conquer during his campaign into the Balkans. As the Venetian sets his eyes on the castle he cannot hide his admiration:

It was at the top of a high hill, its towers streaming with flags were caught by the faint red glow of the setting sun, and it was white; purest white and beautiful. I didn’t know why I thought that one could see such a beautiful and unattainable thing only in a dream. In that dream you would run along a road twisting through a dark forest, straining to reach the bright day of that hilltop, that ivory edifice; as if there were a grand ball going on which you wanted to join in, a

⁴¹The name of the castle is not arbitrary as the word ‘doppio’ means ‘double’ in Italian. This choice alludes to the duality that runs throughout the narrative.

chance for happiness you did not want to miss, but although you expected to reach the end of the road at any moment, it would never end. (Pamuk, 2001: 128)

The castle as described by the Venetian appears to be a fantastical creature with an impressive beauty. Based on this depiction the castle seems not merely a military target but a symbol for an ideal definition of identity. With its white colour the castle emerges as a pure and untainted entity that can only be seen in a dream. Its perfection makes it impossible to reach thus limiting it into the space of fantasy. Defined as such the castle reflects a metaphysical, ideal definition of identity, which is pure and uncontaminated. While the ideal portrayal of the castle appears evocative of an answer to Hoja's initial question 'Why am I what I am?' the impossibility to reach the castle undermines an eventual resolution.

The castle appears so perfect that the Venetian believes that it is not even a real sight. This level of perfection can only be attained through the castle's unreachable status because it is only then that it can be established as an ideal, originary and pure construction. The ideal depiction of the castle, associated with the purity of the colour white, symbolizes identity as an ideal construction that is pure and absolute, yet unattainable. As opposed to the 'I' of the narrative that gradually unfolds through the Venetian and Hoja who compose its different representations as 'an-other', the castle offers an ultimate model that can only be defined through the impossibility to attain it. Hoja's weapon emerges as a dangerous tool for the castle as with its amorphous shape and its accessibility, it challenges everything that the castle stands for. The weapon that Hoja *invents*, the definition of identity as suggested by *The White Castle*, is unidentifiable, fragmented, and heterogeneous thus obliterating all attempts at a unifying identification. Identity as defined in *The White Castle*, unlike the pure white

castle, is marked by ambiguity and perpetual displacement that obliterate all attempts to a conclusive definition.

The symbolism of the castle is also relevant in Lacanian terminology; according to Lacan the castle symbolizes the 'I' in dreams.

Correlatively, the formation of the *I* is symbolized in dreams by a fortress, or a stadium – its inner arena and enclosure, surrounded by marshes and rubbish-tips, dividing it into two opposed fields of contest where the subject flounders in quest of the lofty, remote inner castle whose form (sometimes juxtaposed in the same scenario) symbolizes the id in a quite startling way. (Lacan, 2006: 5)

Although the distinction between the two areas of the castle is absent in *The White Castle*, the symbolism of the castle still echoes in relation with identity. According to Lacan the castle as the representation of the 'I' plays an important role in the protection of the id. This protective role of the castle turns into an ideal with the Doppio Castle, which represents the 'I' as an unattainable ideal of unity.

Towards the end of the narrative, the initial similarity between the Venetian and Hoja gradually disappears. Hoja is the one who first notes the changing appearance of the Venetian:

On one of those winter nights during which we spoke very little, often drifting off into our own thoughts, Hoja suddenly said I had much changed, that *I had finally become a completely different person*. My stomach burned, I began to sweat; I wanted to make a stand against him, to tell him he was wrong, tell him that I was as I had always been, *that we were alike*, that he should pay attention to me the way he used to do... but he was right; my eye was caught by the portrait of myself I had brought home that morning and left leaning against a wall. I had changed: I'd grown fat from stuffing myself at feasts, I had a double chin, my flesh had become slack, my movements slow; worse, *my face was completely different...* (Pamuk, 2001: 110, *my emphasis*)

Unlike at the beginning of the narrative where both the Venetian and Hoja had perceived themselves as alike, they both agree that they look distinct from one another. This shift is not merely engendered by the physical transformation of

the Venetian but rather reverberates within the framework of identity formation. Initially when the two men perceived one another as identical they represented a process of identity formation that was founded on the assumption of a singular ideal mirror image. In order to achieve an originary definition of their 'selves' they needed to identify with that ideal mirror image. The initial resemblance between the Venetian and Hoja thus reflects how they perceived each other as the unified, singular mirror image. In their attempt to define 'what they are' both resorted to binary positions that confirmed the definition of their 'self' as originary and singular. The initial similarity between the Venetian and Hoja was the result of a metaphysical definition of identity that forced them to operate as each other's mirror image with which they needed to identify in order to obtain an essential and singular definition of 'what they are'.

The disappearance of the similarity displays that the singular mirror image is no longer valid as a source of identification; instead they have various mirror images that allow them to re-invent themselves as perpetual displacement. The identification is no longer identification with an ideal fantasy that is doomed to fail, but rather a constant play where through difference and deferral no eventual closures can be reached.

The dissimilarity of the Venetian and Hoja, revealed towards the end of the narrative, is also significant for the broader framework of the East/West trope. Their difference does not evidence a binary opposition but rather underlines the impossibility of an identity formation within the metaphysical tradition, which requires identification with a singular mirror image as the 'other'. As the Venetian and Hoja illustrate, however, it is only through a redefinition of the mirror image as multiple and fragmented that identification as displacement can become

possible. The definitions of the East and the West are only possible with the multiple mirror images, which lead to their representation as ‘an-other’.

The acknowledgment of their dissimilarity enables the exchange of identities because it is the undermining of the ideal mirror image that enables the Venetian and Hoja to be ‘what they are’ by representing their ‘selves’ as ‘an-other’. They are ‘what they are’ by becoming ‘an-other’.

We exchanged clothes without haste and without speaking. I gave him my ring and the medallion I'd managed to keep from him all these years. Inside it there was a picture of my grandmother's mother and a lock of my fiancée's hair that had gone white; I believe he liked it, he put it around his neck. Then he left the tent and was gone. I watched him slowly disappear in the silent fog. It was getting light. Exhausted, I lay down in his bed and slept peacefully. (Pamuk, 2001: 130)

An effective line of enquiry could be developed by the following question: Why does not the exchange between Hoja and the Venetian take place at the beginning of the narrative where the similarity between the two men was evident? The first thing that needs to be taken into consideration to answer this question is the fact that this exchange does not suggest an interchangeable definition for the Venetian and Hoja where they can merely assume each other's identities. This exchange, instead, displays the process of becoming ‘an-other’ as the only possible way to be ‘what they are’.

The Venetian and Hoja looked alike as a result of the definition of identity that is based on the originary and unique definition of the ‘self’ which is contingent on a process of identification involving an ideal mirror image as the symbol of alterity. The initial resemblance between the Venetian and Hoja stemmed from their perception of each other as that mirror image with which they needed to identify; they looked alike because they recognized the other as their mirror image. In order to identify with that mirror image which would provide

them with a singular definition of 'what they are', the Venetian and Hoja needed to establish themselves at the two ends of the metaphysical binaries that included self/other, East/West, master/slave. These categories, however, failed to provide them with a singular definition of their identities.

As the mirror scene illustrates the mirror image as suggested by *The White Castle* is not a singular ideal symbol for a unified definition of identity but rather is multiple and fragmented. The identification process is not a linear journey directed at reaching a correspondence between the 'self' and the mirror image but is a non-linear play of difference and deferral as the 'self' becomes 'what he is' by becoming 'an-other' through his multiple representations. The physical similarity between the two men is irrelevant to their becoming 'an-other' as they no longer operate as each other's ideal mirror image. The final scene defines 'what they are' by showing that the only possible definition of their 'self' is obtained by their different representations as 'an-other'; identification for the Venetian and Hoja is not with an ideal mirror image, but is a perpetual displacement that, far from providing closure, enables further dissemination by remaining ambiguous. Identity as ambivalence is portrayed in the final chapter of *The White Castle*.

B. The Last Chapter

After Hoja walks away into the night wearing the Venetian's clothes and the Venetian goes back to sleep in Hoja's bed, in the final chapter of the narrative the identity of the narrating 'I' remains ambiguous. As he addresses the reader the narrator once again underlines the fact that he is also the writer of the story: 'I have now come to the end of my book. Perhaps discerning readers, deciding my story was actually finished long ago, have already tossed it aside' (Pamuk, 2001; 131). Following the implied departure of Hoja disguised as the Venetian, the narrator is left alone which contributes to the ambiguity regarding his identity. The only clues can be found in his language as the narrator uses specific phrases that have been associated with Hoja throughout the narrative:

I persevered for almost seven years more; perhaps if my nerves had been stronger, or more important, if I hadn't sensed there would be another purge of the circle around the sultan, *I would have gone on to the end*; I would have passed through the doors the sovereign opened for me and let go of the former life I wished to forget. I was now quite shameless in answering the questions about my identity which had at first put me on guard: 'Of what importance is it who a man is?' I'd say. 'The important thing is what we have done and will do.' *I believe it was through this cupboard door that the sultan got into my mind!* (Pamuk, 2001: 134, *my emphasis*)

The narrator's use of these phrases that have been associated with Hoja throughout the narrative could lead to the conclusion that the narrator of the final chapter is Hoja. The narrator's encounters with the sultan, however, challenge this assumption when the sultan asks the narrator about details that only the Venetian could know:

he'd ask me details only He could have known, told me not to be afraid, to give the first answer that came into my head: what event was

it that had precipitated His sister's stutter? Why had He not been accepted by the University of Paddua? (Pamuk, 2001: 134)

As a result neither the specific expressions that the narrator uses nor the questions of the sultan in the final chapter bring clarity to the ambiguity regarding the identity of the narrator. With each piece of information there emerges yet another possible interpretation, preventing the formation of a definitive answer; the identity of the narrator thus remains ambiguous.

As the above passage makes explicit the sultan still plays an important role following the alleged exchange. Having made explicit the distinction between the Venetian and Hoja earlier, the narrator continues to explain the points that differentiate between the two men. The sultan starts telling stories to the narrator as he recalls the days when the departed other – whether it is the Venetian and Hoja – was still with them:

He revealed some things that frightened me because I couldn't quite tell which of us he was talking about, but he spoke with love, not with violence: there had been days when, unable to tolerate His self-ignorance, he feared he would have Him killed in anger... As I listened I thought I saw myself, the two of us, from the outside as in a dream, and I realized that we had lost the end of the thread. (Pamuk, 2001: 135)

Listening to the sultan, the narrator is unable to distinguish whether he is referring to the Venetian or Hoja. This ambivalence while adding to the confusion that dominates the identity of the narrator, also gives away an important clue regarding his identity. The anecdotes that the sultan tells in remembrance of the old days do not specifically refer to the Venetian or Hoja but rather evoke the 'creature' that emerged earlier in the narrative as a combination of the Venetian and Hoja.

Another important clue is the use of the pronoun ‘He’ with majuscule to refer to the ‘other’ who had left. By refraining from referring to the one who has departed as Hoja, the narrator also conceals his own identity. Furthermore the use of the majuscule adds significance to the use of this pronoun. Speculating on the implication of the use of ‘He’, various possible interpretations could be offered: ‘He’ may refer to a divine entity, it may be evocative of the concept of the ‘Other’ or from a national perspective it may also refer to Kemal Atatürk.⁴² Within the framework of the Venetian and Hoja’s attempts to define their identities, it refers to ‘an-other’ ‘I’. ‘He’ is one of the many representations that make the narrator ‘what he is’ by representing him as ‘an-other’; therefore it is not entirely different but not identical to him either. It is part of ‘what he is’ by representing him as ‘an-other’.

I loved Him, I loved Him the way I loved that helpless, *wretched ghost of my own self I saw in my dreams*, as if choking in the shame, rage, sinfulness, and melancholy of that ghost, as if overcome with shame at the sight of a wild animal dying in pain, or enraged by the selfishness of a spoilt son of my own. *And perhaps most of all I loved Him with the stupid revulsion and stupid joy of knowing myself*; my love for Him resembled the way I had become used to the futile insect-like movements of my hands and arms, the way I understood the thoughts which every day echoed against the walls of my mind and died away, the way I recognized the unique smell of sweat from my wretched body, my thinning hair, ugly mouth, the pink hand holding my pen: it was for this reason they had not been able to deceive me. (Pamuk, 2001: 140, *my emphasis*)

As the details in the above passage make explicit the narrator’s love for ‘Him’ is not directed to an entity that is exterior but is intended for the very elements present within him. ‘He’ is a repetition of the narrator’s identity as difference, thus the representation of the narrator’s ‘self’ emerges as a similar yet different ‘He’. The comparison that the narrator establishes between ‘Him’ and

⁴² The pronoun he – *O* in Turkish – is only used in majuscule at the beginning of a sentence. When it appears within a sentence it refers to Kemal Atatürk.

the parts and movements of his own body suggest that the creature that appeared earlier is an intertwining of the Venetian and Hoja. 'He' is an intrinsic part of the narrator and thus allows his representation as 'an-other', in this case as the Venetian. The narrator of the final chapter constructs his identity by composing a story where he represents himself as 'an-other', as the Venetian. His representation in the story is what makes him 'what he is' by providing yet another representation of his 'self' thus resulting in identification as dissemination of meaning.

Evliya Chelebi⁴³ who visits the narrator in the final chapter, finds this definition problematic and unsettling. Evliya distinguishes between the outside and the inside in a hierarchical fashion; for him the outside world is composed of 'strange and surprising' (Pamuk, 2001: 139) elements, that invite constant change, whereas the inner self that is characterized by stability needs to remain unaltered in order to protect its integrity. He believes that the desire for change needs to be restricted to the outside world as otherwise it would become a great threat for the individual. Upon hearing the narrator's story about two men who have exchanged identities, Evliya explains how these men who thought too much about themselves also caused their eventual unhappiness:

To search within, to think so long and hard about our own selves, would only make us unhappy... If we did, little by little, by writing those kinds of tales, by searching for the strange within our selves, we, too, would become someone else, and God forbid, our readers would too... But I wanted to! (Pamuk, 2001: 139)

The change that Evliya considers to be a great threat to the integrity of the self is the reason why the narrator is creating his stories. For the narrator 'what he

⁴³ Evliya Chelebi (1611-1682) famous Ottoman traveler, author of the ten-volume work *Book of Travel* (Seyahatname) where he talks about his journey starting in Istanbul and ending in Cairo.

is' is not a predetermined definition that needs to be protected from modification but is only possible as a constant play of difference, which is made possible through the stories where he can represent his 'self' as 'an-other'. For the narrator:

identity is never merely packaged, but decisively crafted by narrative discourse. Who you are, who you were and who you progressively or suddenly have become depends in crucial ways upon how, to whom and when you manage to tell about your personal clash with History, turning it into Story. (Spiridon, 2009: 282)

The narrator with, a metafictional note states that he will 'conclude my book by telling of the day I decided to finish it' (Pamuk, 2001: 141). It is the visit of a traveller from Italy who had heard about the narrator through 'Him' that compels him to finish his book. Having met 'Him' and heard about the narrator from 'Him' the visitor wishes to learn more about the narrator and his life in Gebze, Turkey. After showing the visitor his house and talking about 'Him', the narrator decides to show his visitor the book that he has written, which is also the story that he had told the readers of *The White Castle*. The visitor, who can read Turkish, slowly starts reading the book that the narrator had given him while the narrator is watching him from a distance.

I watched with delight as he looked first at some infinite point in the emptiness, as people do in such situations, at some non-existent focal point, but then, then, as I had expected, his vision focused: now he was looking at the scene through the frame of the window. My intelligent readers have surely understood: he was not so stupid as I supposed. As I had thought he would, he began to turn the pages of my book greedily, searching, and I waited with excitement till at last he found the page he was looking for and read it. Then he looked again at the view from that window overlooking the garden behind my house. I knew exactly what he saw. Peaches and cherries lay on a tray inlaid with mother-of-pearl upon a table, behind the table was a divan upholstered with straw matting, strewn with feather cushions the same colour as the green window frame. I was sitting there, nearly seventy now. Further back, he saw a sparrow perched on the edge of a well among the olive and cherry trees. A swing tied with long ropes to a high branch of a walnut-tree swayed slightly in a barely perceptible breeze. (Pamuk, 2001: 145)

The scene that the visitor sees from the window is the same as the view that the Venetian remembered when he was about to be killed for not converting to Islam. That scene the Venetian had remembered as belonging to his memories from Italy now appears as the view that the narrator of the final chapter has in his house in Gebze. The exact reproduction of the details of the garden show how the narrator, who also appears as the writer of the story, had been writing his story, sitting at his desk, looking out from his window, imagining the events that he had included in his story. The view from his window illustrates the process of identity formation, as the view in itself does not contain an inherent meaning, its representation in the different stories provided the view with distinct significances. When the view appeared in the Venetian's story it became the view he had from his house in Italy, when it re-appears in the end the view belongs to the narrator who has been contemplating it in Gebze. The view thus becomes 'what it is' by becoming 'an-other' view in the stories where it is represented. The identity of the narrator is thus defined through the story where he represents his 'self' as 'an-other'. The ambivalence of the narrator's identity is the only definition possible, as each representation of his 'self' will re-invent him as yet 'an-other' resulting in a perpetual identification as displacement.

C. The Dedication, The Epigraph and The Preface

The problematization of the attempt to define identity as it has been laid out in the homodiegetic level of *The White Castle* is also addressed in the heterodiegetic levels through the use of various paratextual elements. The epigraph, the dedication and the preface while operating as a frame story also display how the different identities are constructed through representation.

The dedication that appears at the beginning of *The White Castle* immediately establishes an intertextual link with Pamuk's previous novel *Silent House*. For readers who are familiar with that work the dedication that says 'For Nilgün Darvinoğlu a loving sister (1961- 1980)' ought to be written by Faruk, Nilgün's elder brother, in the memory of his sister who dies as the result of a brutal attack in *Silent House*. Faruk thus emerges as the principal heterodiegetic narrator of *The White Castle*. The epigraph succeeds the dedication and it is implied that the epigraph is also Faruk's choice.

To imagine that a person who intrigues us has access to a way of life unknown and all the more attractive for its mystery, to believe that we will begin to live only through the love of that person – what else is this but the birth of great passion?⁴⁴

Marcel Proust, from the mistranslation of Y. K. Karaosmanoğlu

This selection from Marcel Proust draws attention to the indispensable presence of narcissism within love. Love is not a feeling directed towards the

⁴⁴ In the Turkish edition of *The White Castle* the word is *aşk*, love. The Turkish word for passion is *tutku*. This variation not only alters the meaning but also becomes noteworthy especially in regards with the note regarding the 'mistranslation' that follows. In the following pages, the issue of translation will be discussed in relation with Faruk's unconventional method of translation. In my discussion of the epigraph I will follow the semantic field of 'love' and not 'passion'.

other as the source of an absolute alterity but is created by the possibilities of representations that it enables for the self. Interaction with the other provides a space where the self can re-invent his 'self' as 'an-other' which constitutes the basis of the feeling of love. The promise of a more 'attractive' life is thus intricately connected to the representation of the 'self' as 'an-other' thus offering new possibilities for the definition of his 'self'. For Derrida this narcissistic dimension is a necessary part of the relation to the other. He states that despite the inconsistencies, it is through this narcissistic dimension that the relation to the other becomes possible.

I believe that without a movement of narcissistic reappropriation, the relation to the other would be absolutely destroyed, it would be destroyed in advance. The relation to the other – even if it remains asymmetrical, open, without possible reappropriation – must trace a movement of reappropriation in the image of oneself for love to be possible, for example. Love is narcissistic. (Derrida, 1995a: 199)

Within the framework of *The White Castle* this narcissistic aspect reverberates in relation with the diegetic level where the Venetian and Hoja found in each other the possibility of a new 'self' as they both re-invented themselves as 'an-other'. Faruk's choice of this epigraph is not merely relevant for the homodiegetic level of the narrative but also reflects how he re-invents himself through this narrative. As I will discuss in the following pages, the preface allows Faruk to define his 'self' as 'an-other'; his 'I' from *Silent House* is represented as 'an-other' in *The White Castle* where he is the writer and the translator.

Another important feature of the epigraph is the indication of 'mistranslation'⁴⁵ that is found in the English version of *The White Castle*. The indication in the epigraph states that the translation of Karaosmanoğlu is a

⁴⁵ There is no such indication in the Turkish original. I have contacted the publishing house to enquire about this indication but haven't received any replies. The indication in the English edition thus appears as the translation of a translation.

‘mistranslation’ thus implying that there is a ‘correct’ translation of the selection from Proust. This indication is rather unsettling because of its assumption of a ‘correct’ translation. As will become evident with the translation process that Faruk adopts for the manuscript, translation is also a form of representation where the ‘original’ will be re-invented as ‘an-other’ generating further possibilities for dissemination of meaning.

Following the epigraph and the dedication comes the preface written by Faruk. The preface, while operating as a framing story to the homodiegetic level of *The White Castle*, also develops further the questions of identity that is addressed throughout the narrative by adding Faruk among the possible candidates for the unidentified narrator of the final chapter. The preface not only calls into question the definitions of the ‘I’ but also the conventional definitions of the preface as such.

The established role of the preface is to provide an informative space to the reader. It usually appears before the main text and provides the necessary clarifications about what will follow. Although the preface is conventionally considered as the space where the ‘truth’ of the book is explained, Spivak in her preface to Derrida’s *Of Grammatology* draws attention to an alternative possibility:

We think of the Preface, however, not as a literary, but as an expository exercise. It ‘involves a norm of truth’ although it might well be the insertion of an obvious fiction into an ostensibly ‘true’ discourse. (Spivak, 1997: x)

Having made the possibility of fiction apparent in the preface Spivak states that ‘the preface harbors a lie’ (Spivak, 1997: x) because despite the prefix ‘pre-’ which indicates precedence, the preface is written after the main text. This

temporal inconsistency of the preface is also very problematic for Derrida who challenges such categorization as he opposes the definition of an ultimate presence.

The *pre* of the preface makes the future present, represents it, draws it closer, breathes it in, and in going ahead of it puts it ahead. The *pre* reduces the future to the form of manifest presence. This is an essential and ludicrous operation: not only because writing as such does not consist in any of these tenses (present, past, or future insofar as they are all modified presents); not only because such an operation would confine itself to the discursive effects of an intention-to-mean, but because, in pointing out a single thematic nucleus or a single guiding thesis it would cancel out the textual displacement that is at work 'here'. (Derrida, 2004: 7)

Not only its temporal precedence but also the preface's claim to the 'truth' of the text is problematic. The preface while claiming to be the source of authority regarding the 'truth' of the text, also assumes that there is an unchanging and predetermined meaning within the text. Both the language and the subjectivity that uses the language, however, – the reader, the writer and the prefacer – are subject to constant change thus making it impossible to reach an ultimate meaning, challenging the very definition of the preface. As Spivak states:

So do the two readings of the 'same' book show an identity that can only be defined as a difference. The book is not repeatable in its 'identity': each reading of the book produces a simulacrum of an 'original' that is itself the mark of the shifting and unstable subject that Proust describes, using and being used by a language that is also shifting and unstable. Any preface commemorates that difference in identity by inserting itself between two readings... (Spivak, 1997: xii)

The preface thus both in form and content acknowledges the definition of identity as difference as it operates between two – or more – readings that allow for the re-invention of the text as 'an-other', defining its identity as dissemination of meaning. Echoing the definition of the identity of the narrator in the diegetic

level, the identity of the text too emerges to be possible only through a constant play of difference that allows perpetual displacement of meaning.

Faruk starts his preface by telling of the day he had come across the manuscript that contains the story of the Venetian slave and the Ottoman Hoja in an archive in Gebze.⁴⁶

I found this manuscript in 1982 in that forgotten ‘archive’ attached to the governor’s office in Gebze that I used to rummage through for a week each summer, at the bottom of a dusty chest stuffed to overflowing with imperial decrees, title deeds, court registers and tax rolls. The dream-like blue of its delicate, marbled binding, its bright calligraphy, shining among the faded government documents, immediately caught my eye. (Pamuk, 2001: 1)

Faruk’s initial encounter with the manuscript, rather than being the result of a research with a firm and definitive aim, is a coincidental one. Faruk is not working systematically for a predetermined objective but rather randomly scans the documents.

To further emphasize the effect of the single quotation marks, which cast doubt on the condition of the archive, Faruk explains that it was like a ‘... dump that even the young governor dared not call an ‘archive’’ (Pamuk, 2001: 1). Alongside the indispensable order to classify the documents there are also other attributes that are necessary in the definition of the archive. Derrida uses the etymology of the word in order to unravel these highly significant notions:

In a way, the term indeed refers, as one would correctly believe, to the *arkhe* in the *physical, historical, or ontological* sense, which is to say to the originary, the first, the principal, the primitive, in short to the commencement. But even more, and *even earlier*, ‘archive’ refers to the *arkhe* in the *nomological* sense, to the *arkhe* of the commandment. As is the case for the Latin *archivum* or *archium* (a word that is used in the singular, as was the French *archive*, formerly employed as a masculine singular: *un archive*), the meaning of ‘archive,’ its only

⁴⁶ Gebze is not a coincidental choice. *Silent House* is also set in Gebze where the Darvinoğlu family has a house. Faruk and his siblings spend part of their summer there visiting their grandparents.

meaning, comes to it from the Greek *arkheion*: initially a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the *archons*, those who commanded. (Derrida, 1996: 2)

The archive refers to both a place of commencement as well as commandment. In other words the content of the archive aims to create an originary narrative, which, while unravelling the unique beginning, aims to dominate all other narratives that will be produced. The archive therefore operates as the domain of authority over not only the past, through its choice of documents that will be stored, but also the future through its commandment of the narratives that will be produced.

The archive where Faruk encounters the manuscript, however, operates distinctly as it defies the conventional definition of the archive with the absence of an order that would classify the collected documents. All the documents are scattered around, without any specification regarding the content, date or author. The lack of a classifying order not only problematizes the definition of the archive as such but also calls into question the definition of categories as circumferential attributes aimed to draw strict lines. As Derrida points out the absence of categories that would define the documents poses a threat to the definition of the archive:

there could be no archiving without titles (hence without names and without the archontic principle of legitimization, without laws, without criteria of classification and hierarchization, without order and without order, in the double sense of the word). (Derrida, 1996: 40)

The lack of order, eliminating the commandment aspect of the archive, poses a great threat to the operation of the archive as such. Similar to the preface that challenged the conventional definitions, the archive of *The White Castle* too calls into question the operation of the archive. The ordering of the documents

would imply that they possess an inherent and unchanging meaning that provides them with a singular definition. For Pamuk, on the other hand, the documents do not contain an inherent meaning but will acquire different significances as they are represented in different contexts. Consequently the documents in the archive cannot be categorized because they will gain their significance every time they are represented as ‘an-other’.

Erdağ Göknaar focuses on the use of the term ‘archive’ and draws attention to the haunting presence of the Ottoman past within the Turkish Republic’s psyche. He states that the modernization process that took place during the early years of the Republic not only ignored the Ottoman heritage but also segregated it.

Republican modernity bound and peripheralized the Ottoman past as anti-modern. That is, the Ottoman past – including a century or more of modernization that witnessed two constitutional periods – was Orientalized as the Other of republican modernity. (Göknaar, 2010: 128)

Accordingly Göknaar defines the ‘archive’ in *The White Castle* as ‘a kind of wildly signifying unconscious’ (Göknaar, 2010: 127) of the Turkish Republic that has tried to disregard and orientalise the Ottoman past. With the lack of a classifying order the archive operates as what Göknaar terms a ‘counter-archive’ (Göknaar, 2010: 128) thus remaining outside of the order of the republican discourse. Far from operating as the house of commencement and commandment in the ‘othering’ of the Ottoman past, the counter-archive creates a space where no absolute and single ‘truth’ can be obtained. Faruk’s counter-archive is a space that produces new narratives, which enable dissemination of meaning. The controlling role of the archive is undermined with the counter-archive that enables proliferation of meaning.

The link between the unconscious and the archive can be better understood with Freud's definition of the unconscious. For Freud the unconscious is the 'domain of the irrational drives, something opposed to the rational conscious self' (Žižek, 2006: 3). This definition, while displaying the autonomous structure of the unconscious, also addresses the necessity to control the id through the intervention of the ego. For Lacan, however, 'the unconscious is not the preserve of wild drives that have to be tamed by the ego, but the site where a traumatic truth speaks out' (Žižek, 2006: 3). The main distinction between Freudian and Lacanian definitions of the unconscious results from their perspective on how to deal with this uncontrollable realm. While for Freud the unconscious needs to be tamed by the ego, for Lacan it is not a 'deep Truth that I have to identify with' but rather operates as the space of 'an unbearable truth that I have to learn to live with' (Žižek, 2006: 3). The archive of *The White Castle* offers a distinct approach that problematizes the 'truth' as predetermined. The 'truth' of the archive, as was the case with the 'truth' of the narrator's identity, is never fixed and essential but is only possible as displacement. The archive as unconscious does not contain an inherent and originary 'truth' but is the site of perpetual displacement as the different representations enable. The story that Faruk creates is one such representation that re-invents its 'truth'. Consequently not only the archive in Gebze but history in general is defined through a process of endless re-invention through representation.

Being an unconventional historian in an unconventional 'archive', when he finds the manuscript Faruk does not know what to do with it. As an initial plan he decides to re-read the manuscript several times and eventually he decides to

write an entry about the writer of the manuscript for the encyclopaedia⁴⁷ he works for.⁴⁸ For this purpose Faruk starts conducting a research and investigates the accuracy of the events described in the narrative. His research, however, turns out to be inconclusive as Faruk realizes that: ‘some events described in the story bore little resemblance to fact... On the other hand, our ‘knowledge’ of history generally verified the events in the book’ (Pamuk, 2001: 2). Faruk’s inability to confirm the accuracy of the events described in the narrative supports the definition of history as representation. The events described in the manuscript as historical facts do not possess an inherent originary meaning but rather acquire their significance as they are represented within the narrative. Similar to the life stories that the Venetian and Hoja constructed using their childhood memories, the manuscript too creates a definition of history as ‘an-other’ with the representation of the events.

Alongside the accuracy of the events Faruk also attempts to track down the author of the manuscript yet the result he gets is far from satisfactory.

I kept trying to track down the author of my story, but the research I did in Istanbul libraries dashed most of my hopes.... I came across only one clue: there were other works in these libraries by the ‘left-handed calligrapher’ mentioned in the story. I chased after them for a while, but only disappointing replies came back from Italian universities I’d besieged with a torrent of letters; my wanderings among the tombstones of Gebze, Jennethisar, and Uskudar graveyards in search of the name of the author (revealed in the book⁴⁹ itself though not on the title-page) were also unsuccessful, and by then I’d had enough: I gave up following possible leads and *wrote the encyclopaedia article solely on the basis of the story itself*. As I feared, they didn’t print this article, not however, for lack of scientific evidence, but because its subject was not deemed to be famous enough. (Pamuk, 2001: 2, *my emphasis*)

⁴⁷ Encyclopaedia is a significant thematic connection between *Silent House* and *The White Castle*. Selahattin Darvinoğlu of *Silent House* is Faruk’s grandfather who devoted all his life to the creation of an encyclopedia that would include all the knowledge of the world. The encyclopedia that he never managed to finish turns out to be the failure of Darvinoğlu family in various respects.

⁴⁸ Faruk is among the academics who were unable to work at the university because of their political views following the military coup in 1980.

⁴⁹ The only name revealed in the book is Abdullah Effendi, Hoja’s grandfather.

Faruk's research, rather than providing him with accurate 'facts', introduces more uncertainties. Both the content and the source of the manuscript become scenes where the possibility of fiction is apparent; he finds no 'historical evidence' that proves the accuracy of the events narrated in the manuscript nor is he able to confirm the identity of the writer. These uncertainties, while challenging the status of the preface as the space where the 'truth' of the book is made apparent, also underline the inevitable presence of fiction in all representation. Whether it is the documents in the archive, the preface or the life story of the narrator, all narratives are produced with the possibility of fiction, which emerges as the only possible way to define their identities.

Unable to decide what to do with the manuscript Faruk decides to take a more active position by claiming that he is the writer of the story: 'For a time I told my story to everyone I met, as passionately as though I had written it myself rather than discovered it.' (Pamuk, 2001: 3)

With this claim Faruk appears among the possible candidates for the mysterious narrator of the final chapter, as he could indeed be the 'writer' who has been imagining the whole story while looking at his garden in Gebze. His claim to authorship gradually becomes more substantial as he decides to publish the text. Because the text is written in the Ottoman script Faruk needs to first transcribe and translate it into contemporary Turkish. The illegibility of the Ottoman alphabet for the people of modern Turkey draws attention to the violence that lies at the heart of the Kemalist modernization movement. The changing of the alphabet, by silencing the historical documents through illegibility, contributes to the modernization movement's determination to dispose of the traces of the Ottoman Empire.

It is during this translation process that Faruk becomes a writer as he takes on a more active role and re-writes the manuscript through the translation process.

My readers will see that I nourished no pretensions to style while revising the book into contemporary Turkish: after reading a couple of sentences from the manuscript I kept on one table, I'd go to another table in the other room where I kept my papers and try to narrate in today's idiom the sense of what remained in my mind. (Pamuk, 2001: 3)

Faruk does not try to remain faithful to the original manuscript but writes down the parts that he remembers after reading from the original; he reinvents the original text as 'an-other'. The translation process operates in parallel with the archive, the preface and the identity of the narrator in the sense that rather than referring to an originary meaning that needs to be unravelled, it shows that representation is the only possible way to produce meaning.

Walter Benjamin acknowledges the precedence of the original and states that 'no translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original' (Benjamin, 1999: 73). For Pamuk, on the other hand, the priority of the original is problematic in itself as it assumes an inherent meaning that is equated with presence. The definition of the original rather than having an essential meaning lies in the very fact that it can be represented as 'an-other'. In line with Bhabha's views, translation for Pamuk is what makes the original possible by representing it through repetition as difference.

translation is also a way of imitating, but in a mischievous, displacing sense – imitating an original in such a way that the priority of the original is not reinforced but by the very fact that *can* be simulated, copied, transferred, transformed, made into a simulacrum and so on: the 'original' is never finished or complete in itself. The 'originary' is always open to translation so that it can never be said to have a totalised prior moment of being or meaning – an essence. (Bhabha, 1998a: 210)

Translation rather than ensuring the primacy of the original re-creates it as displacement.

Translation is the performative nature of cultural communication. It is language *in actu* (enunciation, positionality) rather than language *in situ* (*enoncé*, or propositionality). And the sign of translation continually tells, or 'tolls' the different times and spaces between cultural authority and its performative practices. The 'time' of translation consists in that *movement* of meaning, the principle and practice of a communication that, in the words of de Man 'puts the original in motion to decanonise it, giving it the movement of fragmentation, a wandering of errance, a kind of permanent exile'. (Bhabha, 2010: 326)

Translation is not a fixed position where meaning is secured in the 'original' but is a constant movement for both the 'original' and the translation as it is through the perpetual displacement that meaning is produced. Faruk's translation corresponds to Bhabha's definition as far from assuming the prevalence of an inherent meaning in the original; it introduces movement and re-invents it as 'an-other' in his representation. His translation is the only possible translation as it sets in motion displacement while undermining the primacy of the original.

Erdağ Göknaç, focusing on the shift from the Ottoman script to the Latin alphabet, draws attention to the legibility of the text. He claims that it is through Faruk's translation and transcription that the manuscript gains legibility. He states that Faruk's translation:

makes the Ottoman context legible again, and it unearths a buried Ottoman Islamic cosmopolitan culture centered in Istanbul (where the figure of the Ottoman is again 'master' vis-à-vis a European 'slave'). (Göknaç, 2010: 128)

Göknaç's proposition is problematic as it accords a rather passive role to the manuscript while making Faruk and his translation the active agents that expose the hidden 'truth' of the text. Faruk's translation, far from uncovering the

hidden and forgotten meaning of the narrative, displays its always already fragmented constitution as well as the impossibility of an original and inherent meaning. It does not aim to reach a prior and ultimate meaning but rather shows that the only possible way to produce meaning is to represent it by repeating it as ‘an-other’. Far from according legibility to the cryptic original, Faruk’s translation indicates the impossibility of a primary meaning that needs uncovering.

Within the broader cultural framework of Turkish identity and its Ottoman past, the archive, the preface and the translation, as they figure in *The White Castle*, all indicate the impossibility of a singular and originary history. Challenging their claim to an absolute ‘truth’ *The White Castle* displays how the only possible way to produce meaning is through representation where the ‘self’, ‘the original text’ or ‘truth’ will be repeated, re-invented as ‘an-other’ thus creating an ambivalent space where meaning will be possible as displacement.

D. The Afterword

The afterword, which only appears in the Turkish editions⁵⁰ of *The White Castle*, operates very similarly to the preface. Signed by Orhan Pamuk, the afterword aims to explain the creation process of the narrative while also displaying the sources for many of its constituents. Despite the fact that it does not appear in the English edition, the afterword is nevertheless part of *The White Castle* as very much like the preface far from explaining an essential ‘truth’ of the narrative it contributes to the ambiguity that defines it, by representing it in a different context. It not only offers a re-invention of the text by repeating it as ‘another’ but also allows Pamuk to re-invent himself as Orhan Pamuk the writer.⁵¹

Orhan Pamuk starts by explaining how he first had the idea for his book:

The inspiration for *The White Castle* visited me in its initial ghostly form as I was finishing my first novel... It took the form of a soothsayer, called to the palace, walking down blue streets at midnight. (Pamuk, 2007: 247)

This original idea then takes a different turn with the inclusion of an identical twin. The narrator acknowledges that with the introduction of this new dimension he did not ‘have to expand too much effort to immerse myself in that most celebrated of literary themes: identical twins changing places’ (Pamuk, 2007: 249). The information that the narrator provides reveals the initial stages of the creation process. Very much like a genesis story, it outlines the foundational constitution of the narrative. Similar to the Venetian and Hoja who resorted to

⁵⁰ The English translation of the afterword can be found in Pamuk’s collection of essays *Other Colours*.

⁵¹ In order to prevent confusion I will refer to the author as Pamuk and the narrator of the afterword as Orhan Pamuk.

their childhood memories to find an answer to ‘Why am I what I am?’ Orhan Pamuk too defines the ‘identity’ of his narrative by telling the story of its birth. This story, however, does not provide the essence of the narrative but rather, very much like the stories of the Venetian and Hoja, re-invents the story as ‘an-other’.

The story, just like the Venetian’s stories, is composed of various elements that include actual facts, personal anecdotes as well as falsehoods. He initially lists the various sources that figure in his story:

I also made use of certain passages from the letters of a Spanish traveler who visited Istanbul forty years before them, and who described the city succumbing to plague (when even a normal boil would spark terror) and the deportation of Christians to the Princes Islands. Other details that figure in the book come not from the period in which it is set but from accounts of witnesses from other times: Istanbul’s scenic views, firework displays, and nighttime amusements (Antoine Galland, Lady Montagu, Baron de Tott); the sultan’s beloved lions and his lion zoo (Ahmet Refik); the Ottoman army’s Polish campaign (Ahmet Ağa’s *Diary of the Siege of Vienna*); some of the child sultan’s dreams (a book called *Strange Events from Our History*, made from the same stuff as Reşat Ekrem Koçu book that I read in my grandmother’s library)... (Pamuk, 2007: 251)

He then moves on to list the autobiographical details that he included in the narrative:

Like my Italian hero, I once had a new outfit that my brother got to wear, because his was torn to pieces, but it wasn’t red, as in the book (it was navy and white). On cold winter mornings, returning home from an excursion, if our mother bought us something to eat (not *helva* but bitter almond shortcake), she would say the same thing as the Master’s mother: ‘Let’s eat these before anyone sees us.’ The book’s redheaded dwarf bears no relation to the classic from our childhood, *The Redheaded Child*, or any dwarf in any of my novels past and future; I saw him in 1972 in Beşiktaş market. (Pamuk, 2007: 251)

Echoing the stories that the Venetian compose to entertain the sultan, Orhan Pamuk too creates stories by bringing together different elements. The truthfulness of these elements is not a concern because just like the sultan, Orhan Pamuk too is not interested in the ‘real’ details as ‘all life is essentially the same’.

These different components do not possess an inherent and originary meaning that needs to be unravelled but rather are assigned significance as they are represented in Orhan Pamuk's narrative.

Orhan Pamuk offers a parody of the authorial position of the writer and the afterword. In a passage omitted in the English translation he states: 'Clarity being our intention let me try to clarify.' (Pamuk, 2001: 189, *my translation*) The clarification he offers, however, is far from being explanatory:

I am still not sure if it was the Italian slave or the Ottoman master who wrote the manuscripts of *The White Castle*. When writing it, I decided to use the closeness I felt to Faruk, the historian in *The Silent House*, to safeguard against certain technical problems... Those familiar with *The Silent House* will remember that after Faruk found the manuscript in the Gebze archives and undertook to render it in the language of the citizenry, he seems to have added passages from other books. At this point, I should like to point out to readers who imagine that I, like Faruk, worked in the archives, rummaging among the shelves of dusty manuscripts, that I am unwilling to take responsibility for Faruk's actions. (Pamuk: 2007, 250)

In contrast to his authorial tone in the previous passages where he provided a detailed list of the sources of his narrative, Orhan Pamuk suggests that he does not know the identity of the writer of the manuscript. This statement, rather than indicating his ignorance, underlines the ambivalence that is at work in all attempts to define identity. Orhan Pamuk refrains from designating the Venetian or Hoja as the writer of the manuscript not only because it is irrelevant to the effect of the narrative but also because of the impossibility to provide a definition of identity as closure. The identity of the writer of the manuscript is determined by its representation in the narrative that led to a definition that is only possible as ambivalence. The inability to have a reconciliatory answer is the only definition that can be offered, as it is in that ambivalent space that identity can be defined as perpetual displacement.

The Venetian, Abdullah Effendi, Hoja, Faruk, Orhan Pamuk, all the possible narrators of *The White Castle* offer a definition of ‘what they are’ by representing their ‘selves’ in the narrative as ‘an-other’. Their representations provide the definition of identity as an ambivalent space where meaning is disseminated through difference and deferral. *The White Castle* portrays displacement as the only possible definition of identity. Similarly the definition of the narrative is represented in the different paratextual elements where Faruk and Orhan Pamuk offer distinct representations, thus re-inventing the text as ‘an-other’. Its representation operates as the answer that *The White Castle* gives to ‘Why am I what I am?’

III. The Painting of the 'I': *My Name is Red*

‘Is it ever possible to be who you are?’ is the question around which *My Name is Red* develops. Invoking two distinct traditions of painting, the Eastern art of miniature and the Western art of portraiture, Pamuk explores the representation of identity using an aesthetic framework. Through the different approaches of the two forms of visual representation Pamuk portrays the impossibility of representing a pure and authentic ‘self’. Without restricting his inquiry to the diegetic level of the narrative Pamuk also incorporates stylistic details from the art of miniature, which result in a reconsideration of the binary definitions of the Eastern art of miniature and the Western novel.

Art of miniature stems from the illustrations found in manuscripts. These illustrations offer visual representations to the text they accompany. The earliest examples of representational painting in Islamic cultures can be found during the reign of the Ummayyad dynasty between the seventh and eighth centuries. A more moderate approach towards the Islamic ban on representational painting, implemented during the Abbasi regime in the ninth century, gave birth to the flourishing of miniature painting, as we know it today. (Mahir, 2004:16) In the Ottoman Empire, miniature painting developed with the establishment of ateliers in the fourteenth century, called *nakkaşhane*, where artists were trained and worked on the different arts of book ornamentation. Ottoman painting initially influenced by Indian and Persian painting, gradually developed its own style. As Ettinghausen notes, Ottoman painting:

is not for the most beautiful in colour and shape, nor does it strive for elegant, sensuous movement, jewel-like detail, and delicate ornament... Turkish painting is descriptive and matter-of-fact and presents contemporary events in a direct, solemn and unemotional manner with all their characteristic physical details, though without a concern for psychological subtleties... (Ettinghausen, 1965: 23)

Within the framework of *My Name is Red*, Western art of portraiture represents the yearning for inscribing a singular definition of the ‘self’, whereas the Eastern art of miniature symbolizes the desire to erase all traces of an individual ‘self’. *My Name is Red*, by incorporating theoretical and stylistic details from both traditions, portrays the impossibility of both positions while also blurring the line that separates them. Pamuk shows how the desire to define a unique identity that the miniaturists consider to be essentially Western, is as impossible as the miniaturists’ desire to erase all traces of individuality. Using the artistic possibilities, Pamuk investigates an alternative definition of identity that is not restricted within these binary positions.

Within this framework I will first discuss the parallels between miniature art and *My Name is Red* to explore the implications of these similarities and in the second part of this chapter I will focus on the question of personal style as it operates in the miniature tradition and the Western art of portraiture. I will discuss how the desire to inscribe a singular and unique identity operates in the distinct forms of representation such as the novel, the miniature and the Western portrait.

My Name is Red is Orhan Pamuk’s sixth novel, published in 1998 in Turkish; the English translation by Erdağ Göknar appeared in 2001. The novel won many prestigious literary awards including the French Prix du Meilleur Livre Etranger in 2002 and the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award in 2003. *My Name is Red* is both a detective and a love story set in the context of a circle of miniature artists in sixteenth century Istanbul. The novel takes place over nine days⁵² in Istanbul during the winter of 1591. Black, the protagonist, returns to

⁵² The nine days correspond to the nine paintings that compose the secret book of Enishte Effendi.

Istanbul after twelve years of exile in the East when his maternal uncle, Enishte Effendi⁵³ summons him to work on a secret book commissioned by the Sultan. Enishte Effendi is himself a miniaturist who was sent to Venice as an ambassador by the Sultan. Inspired and impressed by the Venetian paintings, especially the portraits, Enishte Effendi convinces the Sultan to secretly commission a book for the thousandth anniversary of the Hegira,⁵⁴ the secret book would include representational paintings in the Western style and a portrait⁵⁵ of the Sultan. Enishte Effendi commissions four talented miniaturists, Olive, Butterfly, Stork and Elegant who secretly work for the preparation of the book. Their activity is interrupted when they find out that Elegant Effendi has been killed. Enishte Effendi counts on Black to finish the book and to find the murderer. On his return to Istanbul, Black is still in love with Shekure,⁵⁶ Enishte Effendi's beautiful daughter, who is now a widow with two sons, Orhan and Shevket. In order to win her heart, Black must solve the mystery of the murder and complete the secret book. Since painting was a controversial theme in a Muslim society, the rumours surrounding the secret book trigger anger in the more conservative segments of society, which is represented by Nusret Hoja of Erzurum and his followers in the narrative. They accuse the miniaturists and Enishte Effendi of heresy as the creation of a book that includes paintings made in the Western style goes against their values.

⁵³ Enishte means 'uncle' in Turkish but is used as a proper name in *My Name is Red*. Effendi is a title used to show respect and courtesy.

⁵⁴ In AD 622, Muhammad departed from Mecca to Medina to escape from the opposition in Mecca. Hegira is the name given to that journey from Mecca to Medina. The year of the Hegira is also considered the first year of the Islamic calendar. This displacement echoes in relation with the displacement of traditional values as the sultan commissions a book composed of representational paintings to commemorate a purely Muslim event.

⁵⁵ The portrait is also not allowed in the Islamic art of visual representation.

⁵⁶ Shekure and her sons Orhan and Shevket are named after Pamuk's mother and elder brother Şevket Pamuk.

The narrative style of *My Name is Red* echoes the discussion regarding the inscription of personal style as the fifty-nine chapters are narrated by the different characters in the first-person singular. Each narrator gets to express his viewpoint of the events creating a dialogic narrative. As Olcay Akyıldız notes, the dialogic constitution of the narrative prevents the reader from designating a singular voice that expresses the author's views. This impossibility mimics *My Name is Red*, which refrains from offering a solution to the questions it raises (Akyıldız, 2008: 229). The multiplicity of voices that express different and even contradicting views obliterate the possibility of an absolute and pure reading of the text. A final and authentic definition for both the text and the 'self' thus proves problematic.

The art of miniature constitutes the main focus of *My Name is Red*; various scenes from different miniature paintings are depicted in meticulous details. One specific story, however, stands out in the sense that it portrays the major issues of the narrative in a condensed form: the story of Hüsrev and Shirin.⁵⁷ Shekure in *My Name is Red* offers a brief summary of the story but a more detailed version appears in Pamuk's collection of essays entitled *Other Colours*:

Şirin is an Armenian princess and a great beauty. Hüsrev is a prince, the son of the Persian shah. Şapur wants to make his master Hüsrev fall in love with Şirin, and Şirin with Hüsrev. With this in mind he travels to Şirin's country. One day, when Şirin has gone to the forest with her courtiers to eat and drink, he hides among the trees. There and then, he draws a picture of his fine handsome master, hangs it on a tree, and makes himself scarce. As Şirin frolics in the forest with her courtiers, she sees the picture of Hüsrev hanging from the branch and falls in love with this person in the picture. Şirin does not believe in her love; she wants to forget the picture and her response to it. Then, during another excursion to another forest, the same thing happens. Şirin is again affected by the picture; she is in love but helpless. During a third excursion, when Şirin again sees Hüsrev's picture hanging from a branch, she knows she is helplessly in love with him. She accepts her love and begins to search for the person whose likeness, whose image, she has seen. In the same way, Şapur makes

⁵⁷ Shirin is also spelled Şirin.

his master fall in love with Şirin, but in this case he does not use pictures but words. After falling equally in love, one through pictures and the other through words, these two young people begin to search each other out...In Nizami's version, the story of Hüsrev and Şirin carries on with the utmost elegance. What I can identify with most easily here is Şirin's surprise, the way she wavers between image and reality. (Pamuk, 2007: 284)

The story of Hüsrev and Shirin is not only about two people falling in love but also about the power of representation; it is through each other's visual and textual representations that Hüsrev and Shirin fall in love. The representation of Hüsrev is juxtaposed with the 'real' Hüsrev, causing the expression of uncertainty that Pamuk detects in Shirin's face. Shirin's surprise is generated by her inability to decide between the 'real' Hüsrev and his representation, his image.

While Shirin's surprise implies a formal resemblance between the 'real' Hüsrev and his painting, the prohibition of formal representation raises questions regarding the extent of the similarity. As Pamuk notes in *Other Colours* Hüsrev's face is depicted only as a red spot, lacking facial features:

Though there was a picture inside the frame hanging from the tree, it never showed the Hüsrev I expected to see. Though I have searched for it everywhere, I have never found my own conception of Hüsrev reflected in any miniature. In all these miniatures, the picture inside the picture was so small that Hüsrev was an undistinguished, unrecognizable red spot rather than a character or a developed face. (Pamuk, 2007: 289)

The miniaturists, despite having the expertise to paint on such a small scale prefer to represent Hüsrev's face as a mere red mark. The question that Black in *My Name is Red* raises to inquire into the reasons behind this choice also outlines the starting point of my analysis: 'Why then hadn't they drawn the face and features of Hüsrev – the object of Shirin's love – in enough detail so that he might be recognized?' (Pamuk, 2002: 398) I wish to rephrase Black's question by underlining Shirin's surprise: If the painting is only showing a red spot, why is

Shirin unable to distinguish between the ‘real’ Hüsrev and his painting? What is the reason for Shirin’s surprise?

Underlining how in *My Name is Red* the question of identity ‘is implicated in the problem of representation’ Azade Seyhan notes that:

Since representation can never fully coincide with what it represents or capture an entity in its entirety (since it can never be the same thing that it represents), it can only signal its reference in some form of doubling – like a mirror image, which is both identical and nonidentical with what it reflects. (Seyhan, 2008: 190)

For Pamuk the mirror image that the red spot creates does not establish a relation of priority by designating the ‘real’ Hüsrev as the primary source of an ‘original’ inherent meaning while assigning the red spot a derivative position as the ‘copy’ but rather emerges as the only possible definition of ‘what he is’. The use of a red spot to represent the painting of Hüsrev’s face does not merely derive from the miniature’s ban on representational painting but indicates the only possible way to represent Hüsrev. All attempts to define ‘what he is’ would necessarily involve language; whether that language is musical, textual or visual, it will evidently produce a representation of Hüsrev as ‘an-other’, as is the case with the red spot.

The expression of surprise on Shirin’s face indicates her inability to distinguish between the painting of Hüsrev and the ‘real’ Hüsrev. Despite the fact that his representation does not bear any formal resemblance to Hüsrev, Shirin is still surprised when she sees the painting because Hüsrev’s representation is ‘what he is’ in the sense that it is through the different representations that his identity is defined. Hüsrev’s identity does not contain an inherent originary truth that is reproduced as a derivative copy in each representation but rather it is his representations that through repetition assign him different meanings, thus making

him 'what he is'. Each representation of Hüsrev, whether it is a realistic portrait, a red spot made according to the rules of miniature painting or his representation through words in a novel, would result in his re-invention in a different context as 'an-other' Hüsrev and it is these different representations that define his identity by allowing constant dissemination of meaning. With *My Name is Red* Pamuk discusses how in the distinct traditions of visual arts, representation of identity is necessarily defined through a process of deferring and differing, irrespective of their formal conventions.

On the diegetic level the inclusion of various stylistic details from miniature painting into the novel mimics the effect of Hüsrev's painting by providing a representation of the miniature painting that does not have any formal resemblance. Similar to the red spot that represents Hüsrev's face *My Name is Red* with its textual form offers a representation of the miniature art by repeating it as 'an-other'. Playing with the word/image dichotomy Pamuk represents the visual miniatures through words. The representation of miniature painting in *My Name is Red* through words, defines what miniature painting is by representing it as 'an-other'. Neither confirming the binary positions of the two nor suggesting their interchangeability, Pamuk displays how the definition of the 'self' is only possible by its representation as 'an-other'.

The title 'My Name is Red', while establishing a parallel with the red spot that represents Hüsrev's face, also highlights the representation of visual elements through words. Not only the colour red, but also other visual elements will be defined through words; their identities will thus be defined through their re-invention as 'an-other'. The implications of the name in inscribing a singular

identity will be discussed in relation with the signature of the artists in the following pages.

My Name is Red opens with three epigraphs that are taken from the very source that bans visual representation: The Koran. The three selections are from three different suras⁵⁸ of the Koran and are highly suggestive in relation with the plot of *My Name is Red*. The unconventional inclusion of the Koran in a work of fiction invites questions regarding the possibility of an originary and inherent meaning. The selections from the three different suras are taken out of their Koranic context and reproduced in *My Name is Red* as ‘an-other’, which offers an entirely different frame of reference. The first selection draws attention to the incident that triggers the events that constitute the mystery plot of the narrative: ‘You slew a man and then fell out with one another concerning him’. The second selection conveys an important disagreement among the miniaturists who cannot agree as to whether the artist should paint what he sees or what he remembers after years of training in imitation of the works of others: ‘The blind and the seeing are not equal’. The final selection addresses the East/West opposition and rather than offering a unifying perspective underlines their similar yet distinct nature: ‘To God belongs the East and the West’. The epigraphs, thus, in addition to providing hints regarding the major issues of the narrative, show how these selections when appropriated in different contexts generate new meanings. The new meanings they acquire show that ‘what makes these selections what they are’ is their different representations in different contexts. By repeating them in *My Name is Red* Pamuk re-invents these selections as ‘an-other’, pointing to their definition as perpetual displacement. As the selections of the epigraph indicate it

⁵⁸ Sura is a chapter of the Koran.

is the context in which a sign is reproduced that provides it with its distinct meaning. Pamuk's approach problematizes the ideology of miniature painting, which claims to represent ideal meanings that are independent of forms.

A. The Miniature Novel

Miniature painting and novel genre are forms of artistic representation that have flourished in the two separate geographies that are categorized under the labels of the East and the West. Not only the media used but also other stylistic and theoretical divergences situate these two forms as utterly different from one another. Pamuk with *My Name is Red* offers a distinct approach by showing that the line that separates them is not as impermeable as it appears. Introducing various elements that are distinctive of the miniature painting into his novel, Pamuk not only challenges the rigidity of the line that separates them but also questions the possibility of a pure and unique definition for both forms of artistic production. In this section I will study the effects of the various parallels that Pamuk establishes between the novel form and the art of miniature. Using the pairs word/image, East/West as a starting point I will explore the validity of the elements that define each side of the opposition.

My Name is Red is a novel about the art of miniature. It contains various depictions of miniatures but not a single visual representation is to be found among the pages of the book. Unlike in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* that contains a substantial number of photographs, in *My Name is Red* Pamuk refrains from including any images. This strategy is crucial to understand Pamuk's take on the representation of identity. The lack of images throughout *My Name is Red* substantiates the difference between a miniature painting and a novel in the same way that the red spot is different from the 'real' features of Hüsrev. Pamuk's choice to represent miniature paintings through words suggests that 'what makes

the miniatures what they are', in other words the identity of the miniatures can only be attained through representation. Each representation of the miniatures, just like the red spot that defines Hüsrev, offers a definition of the miniature painting by re-inventing it as 'an-other'.

While the paintings are not reproduced in the narrative, Pamuk incorporates many stylistic features of miniature painting into *My Name is Red*, highlighting the similarity between the two forms of representation, despite using different media and belonging to two distinct cultural and geographical regions. The use of these specific stylistic features throughout the narrative, while undermining the irreconcilable definitions of the two forms, offers a representation of miniature painting as 'an-other'. Miniature painting is repeated in the novel not as the exact reproduction of the same, but rather as a representation that produces meaning through the play of differences.

On the hierarchical ladder of Islamic tradition, writing and scribal art are considered superior to visual representation; due to the ban on visual representation, only calligraphic representation of the verses of the Koran is allowed. The primacy of writing over painting is displayed in the first word revealed to the Prophet: 'Read!' The emphasis on reading and reciting is made explicit within the Koran, which also etymologically derives from the verb to read in Arabic 'qira'a'. The Koran prescribes the reading and reciting of the words of God rather than their representation through image. Similar to the metaphysical definition of meaning equated with presence and speech, the Islamic tradition too accords primacy to speech over writing. As a result, writing which is considered to be derivative and secondary does not pose a threat to God's presence as the ultimate 'creator'. Writing's association with absence makes it a permissible form

of artistic production within the Islamic tradition as it emerges as a mere supplement to the presence of meaning. Writing rather than producing new meaning that would threaten the ideal worldview, is considered to be a mere repetition of which already exists.

The verisimilitude between images and the 'real' world is problematic for Islamic thought as it suggests an equation of the artist with God by undermining God's position as the only 'creator'. The formal correspondence between images and 'real' forms is considered to be an exact replica thus making the artist yet another 'creator' challenging God's singular position. Writing, on the other hand, does not pose such a threat because of its formal qualities; the words on a page appear too far removed from 'reality' and thus do not appear as a replica of the 'real' but a derivative copy of the original. Islamic tradition thus follows a platonic perspective where there is a hierarchy among the forms of representations that are considered to be copies of the original ideal world that contains meaning as presence. Within this framework the only visual representation that is allowed is miniature painting, which operates within strict rules designed to limit its representational powers.

One such rule concerns the physical location of miniature paintings; to prevent these images from becoming icons of worship all miniature painting appears as part of a book. Unlike the paintings done in the Western style, the miniatures are not hung on the walls because that would invoke the icons of Christianity. Instead the miniatures are placed within books next to the text; they thus operate alongside the written word, protected from the threats that other possible meanings assigned to them may pose. Given that according to the Islamic tradition the words are mere copies that only derivatively represent the original

meaning, the books operate as a secure ground where no meaning can be produced. The images, because of their representative powers, which may generate further meanings with distinct interpretations, are thus enclosed within books in order to prevent them from disseminating uncontrollable meanings. Feride Çiçekoğlu compares the role of miniature painting to a ‘footnote’ highlighting its ‘textuality’.

In this context, images are not seen as things-in-themselves but they are treated as ‘footnotes’ even when the image seems to dominate the written word on the page. Image-making becomes an extension of the text, rather than an independent art. It serves the purpose of the words for a better understanding of the meaning, for a description of the aura of the narration, for the depiction of the images the reader of the story will paint in the mind’s eye. (Çiçekoğlu, 2003: 1)

The placing of the miniatures within books not only aims to explain the texts but also intends to restrain the disseminating effects of the visual representations. Given that words are considered to be ‘safer’ in the sense that they do not allow production of meaning as they merely record what has already been produced without leaving room for interpretation, the confinement of the images within books aims to restrict the interpretation of the images. Enishte Effendi of *My Name is Red* explains the impossibility to imagine a painting without a story:

‘Every picture serves to tell a story’ I said. ‘The miniaturist, in order to beautify the manuscript we read, depicts the most vital scenes... Our eyes, fatigued from reading these tales, rest upon the pictures. If there’s something within the text that our intellect and imagination are at pains to conjure, the illustration comes at once to our aid. The images are the story’s blossoming in color. But painting without its accompanying story is an impossibility.’ (Pamuk, 2002: 30)

As a result miniature painting is never appreciated on its own, but always in relation with the story that it is part of. Its worth is decided based on its capacity to render the scenes of the text. This interconnectedness to the text

prevents the painting from producing distinct meanings and secures it within the boundaries of the story that the text is telling. Pamuk, on the other hand, defies the predictable role assigned to the text while also showing the invalidity of the techniques that miniature painting used to prevent dissemination of meaning. By incorporating the stylistic details of miniature painting in *My Name is Red* Pamuk shows how despite their attempt to restrain meaning within the confines of the story told in the book, these images were nevertheless spaces where meaning was being disseminated.

The texts in which miniatures appear are traditional stories like *Hüsrev and Shirin*, *Leyla and Mejnun* with which the viewer is already familiar. The miniatures depict scenes from these popular epics. Consequently the viewer is not looking at the miniatures to acquire crucial knowledge regarding the unfolding of the plot. Thus miniature painting, neither offers a new scene nor formal verisimilitude; it fits within the ideological framework of Islamic tradition. If the miniature is merely reproducing the text as repetition of the same what is there that the viewer finds enjoyable in the painting? Regardless of the various formal restrictions and its confinement within the physical boundaries of the book, miniature painting is never the repetition of the same but is repetition as *différance*. Miniature painting, just like the red spot that represents Hüsrev's face, repeats not an exact replica of the same but creates a space where meaning is produced through deferral and difference. Regardless of the limitations of the Islamic tradition that aimed to prevent it from producing meaning, miniature painting emerges as a form of representation at which point it coincides with the novel genre.

Miniature painting, like any other form of representation, produces meaning through forms. The example Stork gives indicates the distinct forms in which surprise is represented:

‘If love is part of the subject of the painting, the work ought to be rendered with love,’ I said. ‘If there’s pain involved, pain should issue from the painting.... I didn’t depict surprise, as it has been shown for centuries by hundreds of master miniaturists, as a figure with his index finger inserted into the circle of his mouth, but made the whole painting embody surprise. This, I accomplished by inviting the Sovereign to rise to His feet.’ (Pamuk, 2002: 89)

The restrictions, imposed on miniature painting through the ban of formal representation and their confinement to the boundaries of the book, remain inefficient in preventing the miniature from producing meaning through representation. Miniatures never repeat the same as is required by Islamic tradition, but always repeat as displacement thus creating a space where meaning is produced through the re-invention of the same as ‘an-other’. Stork re-invents the same scene that portrays the Sultan’s surprise by representing it as ‘an-other’.

Whether it is a painting, a novel or a musical piece, all forms of representation repeat their subject matter through signs. The sign defined as difference invalidates the repetition of the same as an exact replica but inevitably introduces the possibility of fiction, thus enabling dissemination of meaning through perpetual difference and deferral. As Spivak notes ‘the concept of the sign itself is no more than a legible yet effaced, unavoidable tool. Repetition leads to a simulacrum, not to the “same”.’ (Spivak, 1997: lxxv)

The parallel that Pamuk establishes between the novel form and miniature painting takes a new direction when Elegant Effendi in the first chapter compares the narrative to the Koran. Similar to the Koran that prohibits its depiction

through imagery, Elegant Effendi claims that the book that he is part of is also impossible to depict.

Let me say also that if the situation into which we've fallen were described in a book, even the most expert of miniaturists could never hope to illustrate it. As with the Koran – God forbid I'm misunderstood – the staggering power of such a book arises from the impossibility of its being depicted. I doubt you've fully comprehended this fact. (Pamuk, 2002: 6)

The impossibility, to which Elegant Effendi refers, while acknowledging the possibility of fiction in all representation, assumes an originary meaning. Whether it is the visual representation of the Koran or the representation of the book that Elegant Effendi is part of, all representation is a repetition as *différance*, which re-invents its object as 'an-other'. Within this framework the impossibility to which Elegant Effendi refers is the impossibility of repeating the same.

The book that would visually depict the situation, into which Elegant Effendi and the other miniaturists have fallen, would never be the reproduction of the same but inevitably contain the possibility of fiction. What Elegant Effendi fails to recognize, however, is the fact that the original that is being represented is always already composed as *différance*. Elegant Effendi condemns representation on the grounds that it would fail to reproduce the originary meaning by introducing the possibility of fiction, yet the original itself is not an ideal pure totality but is always already defined by difference. As Derrida notes the same is not an uncontaminated unity but is *différance*: 'The same, precisely, is *différance* (with an *a*) as the displaced and equivocal passage of one different thing to another, from one term of an opposition to the other.' (Derrida, 1984: 12) Consequently the primacy, accorded to the art of calligraphy within the Islamic tradition, results from the assumption that it succeeds in repeating the same

without introducing any possibility of fiction. Visual representation on the other hand is condemned, because of the involvement of ‘interpretation’, which introduces the possibility of modification.

The art of miniature fits perfectly within the ideological framework of the Islamic tradition as the lack of formal accuracy indicates dissociation with the ‘real’. As the miniature is not trying to represent the ‘real’ it does not involve the possibility of fiction. Instead of depicting the world as it is perceived by the artist, miniature painting claims to portray the ideal meanings that are independent of forms. This point of view allows the production of visual representation because it obliterates the possibility of modification, by eliminating the involvement of form.

Establishing yet another parallel with the metaphysical tradition, miniature painting privileges meaning over form. As Master Osman clearly states: ‘Meaning precedes form in the world of our art’ (Pamuk, 2002: 387). The prioritization of meaning over form is reflected in the painting through the ban on formal representation. With the absence of realistic formal depiction, miniature painting claims to offer the viewer an ideal meaning. As a way to differentiate itself from the Western painting, which is condemned because of its realistic depiction, the miniaturists claim that: ‘They depict what the eye sees just as the eye sees it. Indeed, they paint what they see, whereas we paint what we look at’ (Pamuk, 2002: 206). The miniaturists thus imply that their paintings are devoid of forms that would include the possibility of fiction, but are created with pure and originary meaning.

Despite his statement regarding the primacy of meaning over form, Master Osman acknowledges that it is the specific depiction of the miniaturist Butterfly that makes the scenes more beautiful:

Our armies besieging Doppio castle, the Hungarian ambassador kissing the feet of Our Sultan, Our Prophet ascending through the seven heavens, these are of course all inherently happy scenes, but rendered by Butterfly, they become flights of ecstasy springing from the page. (Pamuk, 2002: 314)

Master Osman thus contradicts his previous statement, by suggesting that the scenes do not contain an essential ideal meaning but that it is Butterfly's representation that renders them as such. His contradicting utterances also prove useful evidence by highlighting the fragmented constitution of his 'self'. Master Osman, like the other characters in *My Name is Red*, is not portrayed as a unified and authentic 'self' that symbolizes a singular meaning but with the different and contradicting views that he expresses, emerges as constituted of various fragments.

The hierarchy that the miniaturist tradition establishes between form and meaning in order to distance itself from Western painting, nevertheless situate it within the same metaphysical tradition. This highly platonic perspective that posits an essential and ideal meaning that precedes the derivative and secondary form, makes miniature painting an ideal form of art for the metaphysical tradition from which it is trying to differentiate itself. The words of the tree demonstrate how miniature painting is similar to the Western metaphysics in its definition of form and meaning as dichotomies: 'I don't want to be a tree, I want to be its meaning' (Pamuk, 2002: 61).

One of the distinctive features of miniature painting is the elevated point of view. The bird's-eye view not only symbolizes God's vision of the world but

also eliminates a realistic representation of forms by showing the world from above. In *My Name is Red* Stork tells a story about the birth of this tradition of painting.

Just as the master Arab calligraphers, committed to the notion of the endless persistence of tradition and books, had for five centuries been in the habit of resting their eyes as a precaution against blindness by turning their backs to the rising sun and looking toward the western horizon, Ibn Shakir ascended the minaret of the Caliph Mosque in the coolness of morning, and from the balcony where the muezzin called the faithful to prayer, witnessed all that would end a five-centuries-long tradition of scribal art. First, he saw Hulagu's pitiless soldiers enter Baghdad, and yet he remained where he was atop the minaret. He watched the plunder and destruction of the entire city, the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of people, the killing of the last of the Caliphs of Islam who'd ruled Baghdad for half a millennium, the rape of women, the burning of libraries and the destruction of tens of thousands of volumes as they were thrown into the Tigris... Furthermore, he was struck with the desire to express his pain and the disaster he'd witnessed through painting, which until that day he'd belittled and deemed an affront to Allah; and so, making use of paper he always carried with him, he depicted what he saw from the top of the minaret. We owe the happy miracle of the three-hundred-year renaissance in Islamic illustration following the Mongol invasion to that element which distinguished it from the artistry of pagans and Christians; that is, to the truly agonizing depiction of the world from an elevated Godlike position attained by drawing none other than a horizon line. (Pamuk, 2002: 84)

As a result of this elevated point of view, perspective is lacking in miniature painting. All the figures in a miniature painting are depicted as having the same size, which reflects the more objective bird's-eye view rather than the subjective vision of the artist. The lack of perspective, while operating as a major dividing line between the Western and Eastern forms of representation also supports the theoretical framework of miniature painting. The bird's-eye view eliminates the realistic depiction of forms, which would introduce the possibility of fiction while also resulting in the acknowledgment of the artist's role as the 'creator'.

It needs to be noted, however, that the lack of perspective and the bird's-eye view portrayal constitute the formal details of miniature painting. Miniature

painting thus needs to resort to form in order to convey the ideal meaning that is believed to be independent of forms. The lack of perspective, rather than depicting an inherent originary meaning that is independent of forms, emerges as a form itself thus making evident that no meaning prevails independent of forms as an ideal entity.

In *My Name is Red* the bird's-eye view effect is created with heteroglossia, which allows individual characters to narrate their individual perspectives of the events using their own voices. Rather than having a singular point of view with an overarching narrator, Pamuk uses heteroglossia to prevent the prioritization of one narrator over the other. As is the case in a miniature painting where due to the lack of perspective each figure is depicted in the same size, the narrators of *My Name is Red* appear equidistantly from the reader as they all speak with their individual voices. The number of chapters for each narrator indicates the lack of a hierarchical order: Black: 12, the storyteller: 9, Shekure: 8, the murderer: 6, Enishte Effendi: 5, Esther: 5, Master Osman: 3, Stork: 3, Butterfly: 3, Olive: 3, Orhan: 1, Corpse: 1. Statistically Black appears to be the principal character as he speaks the most. But the storyteller and Shekure too have a substantial number of chapters where they are the narrators, making it difficult for the reader to designate a protagonist. Even the less prominent figures get to speak with their own individual voices as would be the case in a miniature painting where everything is depicted as having the same size, without perspective. The miniaturists are all assigned the same number of chapters in line with their anonymous position within the miniature tradition.

While the lack of an omniscient narrator reproduces the effect of a miniature painting without perspective, the individual voices of the narrators

highlight the microscopic vision that *My Name is Red* offers. A miniature painting depicts a scene from an elevated bird's-eye view thus shows everything happening at the same time and all the figures are present simultaneously because of the lack of perspective. In a miniature painting the viewer is expected to see the scene from the same bird's-eye view and is not offered an insight into the individual gaze of the figures. *My Name is Red*, on the other hand, through the individual voices of the narrators offers the reader fragmented visions that compose the story. Unlike in a miniature painting where the scene is depicted in its entirety with all the figures present at the same time and all the events happening simultaneously, *My Name is Red* introduces microscopic narratives that display the individual perspective of the characters which are brought together to compose the overall plot of the narrative. If both the miniature painting and *My Name is Red* were to be made into a movie, the miniature painting would require a general shot that puts the viewer at an omniscient position, while *My Name is Red* would be composed of distinct zoomed in images that are brought together. Unlike the viewer of a miniature painting the reader of *My Name is Red* is not looking from an elevated point of view but rather appears on a par with the narrators of the story.

As the name miniature reveals, however, the general overview of the miniature painting does not exclude the finely drawn details. While the general depiction of the scene constitutes the immediately visible façade of the painting, the 'miniatures', the microscopic details that require more focus are the distinguishing elements of a miniature painting. As Master Osman notes in order to understand the meaning of the miniature painting, one needs to go into its details:

Hundreds of years hence, men looking at our world through the illustrations we've made won't understand anything. Desiring to take a closer look, yet lacking the patience, they might feel the embarrassment, the joy, the deep pain and pleasure of observation I now feel as I examine pictures in this freezing Treasury – but they'll never truly know. (Pamuk, 2002: 383)

Rather than the general overview of the painting that portrays a scene with which the viewer is already familiar, miniature painting is appreciated for the depiction of the details. *My Name is Red* incorporates the same method with the individual chapters where each narrator tells his 'miniature' story. Each chapter where a different narrator tells his story repeats the overall structure of the narrative thus resulting in further possibilities of meaning. Both miniature painting and *My Name is Red* are more than the sum of their parts as each 'miniature' part re-invents the whole. As Derrida affirms the microscopic fragments become 'bigger than the whole':

the law that says the little part is greater than the whole and contains it, circumscribes it. Derrida has formulated this law more than once, for example in *Given Time*: 'Encadré, enchêssé, bordé, le plus petit devient, métoniquement, plus grand que le plus grand – qui le borde et le cadre' (*DT*, 123)... as Derrida observed in his seminar on this episode, bigger than the whole in the sense of including it, just as this one episode contains the whole novel in a miniature, as the miniscule part of a fractal repeats the pattern of the whole. (Miller, 2001: 77)

Miniature painting neither offers a realistic depiction nor develops an original plotline; it repeats the same scenes from the well-known epics. Thus what makes miniature painting appealing is the depiction of the minute details where the artist can use his creativity. It is the specific ways in which the artist chooses to paint those details that make his painting stand out from others. The variety of details include:

the thousands of varieties of birds including Solomon's wise hoopoe, the jumping swallow, the dodo and the singing nightingale; the serene

cats and restless dogs; fast-moving clouds; the small charming blades of grass reproduced in thousands of pictures; the amateurish shadows falling across rocks and tens of thousands of cypress, plane and pomegranate trees whose leaves were drawn one after another with the patience of Job; the palaces – and their hundreds of thousands of bricks – which were modelled on palaces from the time of Tamerlane or Shah Tahmasp... (Pamuk, 2002: 208)

Similarly *My Name is Red* is not the sum of its chapters but each chapter re-invents the narrative by offering a different representation.

The multiple voices of the narrators of *My Name is Red* that contribute to the fragmented vision of the narrative are also found in a miniature painting, which is composed by the contribution of various artists. In a miniature painting while the apprentices work on the decorations, master miniaturists focus on the main parts of the painting. Thus no single artist can claim authority over the painting. The secret book of Enishte Effendi adopts a similar approach by commissioning different artists:

And I have come to an understanding with each of the most talented and accomplished artists of Our Sultan's atelier. I have been in the process of commissioning one of them to illustrate a dog, another a tree, a third I've charged with making border designs and clouds on the horizon, and yet another is responsible for the horses. (Pamuk, 2002: 29)

The contribution of each miniaturist is similar to the voices of the narrators in *My Name is Red* who tell their individual stories. Rather than trying to obtain a macrocosmic portrayal, both the secret book of Enishte Effendi and *My Name is Red* describe the microscopic fragments that compose their stories by representing it as *différance*. Each narrator of *My Name is Red* and each artist that contributes to the creation of the miniature painting offer their individual representations and thus re-invent the whole that they are part of. Thus rather than

contributing to the creation of a homogenous whole, their individual stories make the narrative ‘what it is’ by re-inventing it in each fragment.

Another parallel between *My Name is Red* and the miniature painting is created with the gaze of the characters depicted. In a miniature painting the gaze of the figures is one of the significant formal details used to communicate information regarding the characters. As Shekure explains the depiction of women and their gaze is in line with their social status within the society. Unlike soldiers and sultans, women in the miniatures are not allowed to look directly at the viewer. Apart from its social implications, the gaze of the figures also operates as a metafictional strategy.

With one eye that is directed at the life outside the painting the figures of the miniature painting acknowledge the presence of the viewer thus affirming the fictional domain of the painting. Their gaze directed at the viewer confirms that they belong to a fictional realm, dissociating them from the ‘real’. This distance between the real and the fictional is a must for the painting to operate within the Islamic ideological framework as it eliminates the painting’s claim to an alternative reality. While enabling this separation between the real and the fictional, the gaze directed outside the painting also acknowledges the presence of the viewer, which poses a threat to the ideal meaning that the miniature painting is claiming to portray. The gaze directed at the viewer, implies that the painting rather than containing an inherent originary meaning, acquires its significance when it comes into contact with the viewer. It is with the gaze that acknowledges the presence of the viewer that the possibility of meaning emerges as dissemination, endangering the predetermined space of the miniature painting.

Don’t be surprised that I’m talking to you. For years I’ve combed through the pictures in my father’s books looking for images of

women and great beauties...Never do they raise their heads, stand straight and face the people of the world as soldiers and sultans would. Only in cheap, hastily illustrated books by careless artists are the eyes of some women trained not on the ground or on some thing in the illustration – oh I don't know, let's say a lover or a goblet – but directly at the reader. I've long wondered about that reader...When I feel this delight, just like those beautiful women with one eye on the life within the book and one eye on the life outside, I too, long to speak with you who are observing me from who knows which distant time and place. (Pamuk, 2002: 51)

Pamuk adopts the same technique throughout *My Name is Red* not to differentiate between the real and the fictional but rather to indicate the indispensable role of the reader/viewer that make the work of art possible; his narrators, like the figures of the miniature painting, address the reader at various occasions, making explicit the fictional constitution of the narrative. In the opening chapter of the narrative the corpse of the late Elegant Efendi is the narrator and he addresses the reader, warning them that the same thing could happen to them: 'But I've ended up in the depths of this deplorable well! It could happen to you, be wary' (Pamuk, 2002: 6).

The paintings that are given voice to by the storyteller at the coffeehouse also address the reader. The dog, which is the first painting that the storyteller gives voice to, confronts the reader who might be doubting what a dog says:

I'm a dog, and because you humans are less rational beasts than I, you're telling yourselves, 'Dogs don't talk.' Nevertheless, *you seem to believe a story in which corpses speak and characters use words they couldn't possibly know.* Dogs do speak, but only to those who know how to listen. (Pamuk, 2002: 12, *my emphasis*)

The dog, similar to the figures in a miniature painting, has one eye on the story that he is part of and one eye outside addressing the reader. The part of the dog that belongs to the story is made explicit by his knowledge of the other parts of the narrative. Despite speaking only in the chapter assigned to him and presenting the reader his own perspective, the dog is aware of the overall plot of

the narrative. The dog's knowledge not only indicates his eye that looks inside the story but also underlines the simultaneous time frame of miniature painting. In the chronological order of *My Name is Red* the chapter of the corpse precedes the chapter where the dog is the narrator. The dog, nevertheless, has information about what happened before his chapter because the events are not inherently linear but it is their ordering within the narrative that introduces a chronological order.

Imitating miniature painting where all the events that are portrayed in the scene are depicted concomitantly, Pamuk too in *My Name is Red* suggests a similar understanding of temporality. He asserts that there is no linear development of events that would imply a progressive movement; the linear ordering of events far from constituting an inherent definition of time as linear, is the result of concerns relating to the plot of the narrative. As the dog's comments regarding the prior events imply, our reconstruction of time does not necessarily follow a linear progressive line that reproduces the events as 'they happened' but is composed of fragments that are arranged later on to obtain, as the Venetian would say, 'a pleasant and enjoyable story'.

The dog's reference to the corpse indicates the elements within the narrative that do not correspond to the real. Pamuk, rather than confirming to such a categorization, uses it to undermine its validity within the conventions of miniature painting. It is the distinction between the real and the fictional that makes miniature painting possible within the Islamic tradition. The lack of formal representation in miniature painting disconnects it from the 'real' world of forms thus restricting it to the realm of the pure ideal meaning. Because it does not bear any formal resemblance to the 'real', miniature painting does not try to recreate an

alternative 'real' world with distinct possibilities of meaning, operating merely on the 'fictional' realm. This assumption, however, is fundamentally problematized with the depiction of Hüsrev's face as a red spot. Despite the lack of formal correspondence the red spot provides a representation of Hüsrev's face by re-inventing it as 'an-other'; the effect of that representation is observed in Shirin's surprise, which indicates that regardless of the formal accuracy, the representation of Hüsrev's face makes him 'what he is' by re-inventing him. The representation is not a derivative copy of Hüsrev's face that remains in the fictional realm but is the only possible definition of Hüsrev. By representing him as 'an-other' representation enables the definition of 'who Hüsrev is' as perpetual dissemination of meaning. In the same way the 'unrealistic' portrayals of the dog and the corpse that speak do not need to have a corresponding 'reality' in order to produce meanings. It is their representation within the narrative, as 'an-other' that defines their identities, enabling production of meaning. Thus miniature painting despite the lack of formal correspondences still produces meaning as representation. It can never be a copy that remains in the 'fictional' realm as the Islamic tradition wishes it to be, as repetition of the same always already contains the possibility of fiction through deferral and difference.

Another figure that addresses the reader is Esther, the Jewish clothier. She is aware of the overall plot of the narrative and tells the readers what happened during the temporal lapse that occurred in between the two chapters:

All of you, I know, are wondering what Shekure penned in that letter I presented to Black. As this was also a curiosity of mine, I learned everything there was to know. If you would, then, pretend you're flipping back through the pages of the story and let me tell you what occurred before I delivered that letter. (Pamuk, 2002: 42)

Like the dog, Esther too has knowledge regarding the overall plot of the narrative and thus tells the readers what they need to know. The comprehensive perspective of miniature painting, which is absent in *My Name is Red*, is compensated with the narrators who have access to insiders' information that provides detailed information regarding the plot.

The straightforward tone that Esther uses to address the reader establishes a sense of familiarity. When she speaks for the first time, she candidly expresses her concern of being misjudged:

But alas, we don't know each other that well, do we? To be honest, I was overcome with embarrassment and worry. How I read the letter you'll never know. Maybe you'll shame and belittle me for my meddling – as if you yourselves aren't as nosy as barbers. (Pamuk, 2002: 43)

Like a confidante, Esther approaches the reader with empathy and thus creates an intimate atmosphere where the reader gets the feeling of being alone with her. This one-to-one interaction between narrator and reader is similar to the interaction between the viewer and the miniature painting. Given the fact that the scenes depicted in a miniature painting are taken from well-known stories, the viewer is not looking at them to find out about the plot line. Instead, as is the case in *My Name is Red*, the figures with the eye that looks outside the painting invite the viewer to zoom in on the specific details, listen to the individual tales of each narrator. As Master Osman had indicated, the significance of miniature painting can only be grasped by investing time and focus on the details; in a similar way Esther invites the reader to pay attention to her story which represents the pattern of the entire narrative.

An additional stylistic element that plays a significant role in miniature painting is the use of colours. The specific use of colours enables the artist who is

not allowed to create realistic depictions, to convey the meanings he wishes to attain. While this significant role of colours is reciprocated in *My Name is Red* it is important to note that colours occupy a principal place in Pamuk's oeuvre in general as the titles of his narratives also indicate: *The White Castle*, *The Black Book* and *Other Colours*. According to Jale Parla, colours 'reflect the social and human aspect of the artistic knowledge that Pamuk wants to communicate' (Parla, 2008: 58, *my translation*). In *My Name is Red* the role assigned to colours is not limited to aesthetic concerns but also allows Pamuk to underline the parallel between the novel and the art of miniature; in both it is the different forms in which the colours appear that produce their meanings.

Far from suggesting a juxtaposed definition of word and image, Pamuk uses colours to point out the impossibility of an inherent ordinary meaning. Whether it is the verbal representation in a novel or a visual depiction in a miniature painting, the definition of the colour is only possible through its representations in those different forms, which re-invent it 'as-other'.

Among the diversity of colours present in *My Name is Red* the colour red emerges as the most prominent one. Starting with the title, the significance of the colour red is made explicit. The meaning of the colour red is not limited to the narrative but is also significant in relation with the art of miniature as it is revealed in the etymology of the word 'miniature'. The Latin origin of the word miniature, *minium* meaning red lead, links the word miniature intrinsically to the colour red. Minium is the element used to paint the first letter of the illuminated manuscripts in red during the Middle Ages in Europe, which eventually gave birth to the tradition of miniature painting.

In the thirty-first section entitled ‘I am Red’⁵⁹ the storyteller at the coffeehouse gives voice to the colour red based on the different drawings that the miniaturists did. Red starts by listing different scenes from different miniatures where it has been used. The variety of scenes in which the colour red appears shows the prominence of the colour, which it also acknowledges: ‘verily and truly, I’ve been everywhere and I am everywhere!’(Pamuk, 2002: 224) Following a detailed depiction of the various scenes in which it appears, the colour red reveals what it considers to be the critical question; echoing Hoja of *The White Castle* the colour red enquires into the elements that make it ‘what it is’: ‘What is it to be a color?’ (Pamuk, 2002: 225) And the colour red provides the following answer:

Color is the touch of the eye, music to the deaf, a word out of the darkness. Because I’ve listened to souls whispering – like the susurrus of the wind – from book to book and object to object for tens of thousands of years, allow me to say that my touch resembles the touch of angels. Part of me, the serious half, calls out to your vision while the mirthful half soars the air with your glances. (Pamuk, 2002: 225)

The synesthetic depiction that the colour red offers is mainly formulated with impossibilities: ‘touch of the eye, music to the deaf, a word out of the darkness.’ Echoing Hoja’s failed attempts to find a definite answer to ‘Why am I what I am?’ the answer that the colour red provides indicates the impossibility of a singular and predetermined answer.

The duality that the colour red underlines connotes the form/meaning dichotomy. As Enishte Effendi had noted previously, miniature painting, through the lack of formal accuracy, claims to paint an ideal world of meanings that is

⁵⁹ In the Turkish original the title of the thirty-first chapter is ‘My Name is Red’ thus establishes a parallel with the title of the narrative. This correspondence is obliterated in the English translation. For the sake of clarity when referring to the title of the chapter I will use the English translation ‘I am Red’.

independent of forms. To illustrate the different approaches between the two traditions Enishte Effendi had resorted to the faculty of sight and claimed that ‘they paint what they see, whereas we paint what we look at.’ (Pamuk, 2002; 206) In defining ‘what is it to be a colour’ the colour red resorts to the same semantic field and states that while the serious half of the colour red appeals to the ‘vision’, the mirthful half is connected to the ‘glance’. The word ‘vision’ is suggestive of form that Enishte Effendi refers to by using the verb to ‘see’ and the word ‘glance’ relates to meaning that he denotes with the verb to ‘look’. While according to Enishte Effendi form and meaning are separate and independent from one another, the colour red suggests a different approach by defining them as the two halves of the same entity. Expressing Pamuk’s views on the relation between form and meaning, the colour red, undermines the hierarchical and binary definition of the two, instead underlining how form is indispensable in order to produce meaning.

The serious part is the form of representation that appeals to the vision. It is serious because its form is determined by the work of art and is not subject to change. The mirthful half refers to the meanings that the form will produce. Its frivolity derives from the fact that it is never stable and predetermined but is in a constant non-linear movement, perpetually in displacement. These two halves make the colour red ‘what it is’ as it is the forms in which the colour red appears that allows its definition as a constant dissemination of meaning. The form, that is the serious half, does not lead to a unique and predetermined meaning as closure but rather enables dissemination of meaning by allowing it to ‘soar the air’. The answer, that the colour red provides, far from dissociating form and meaning, suggests an interlaced definition that enhances further possibilities of meaning.

To further illustrate his point the colour red tells a story about two miniaturists who have gone blind after years of meticulous practice. They discuss how one would explain the colour red to someone who has never seen it:

If we touched it with the tip of a finger, it would feel like something between iron and copper. If we took it into our palm, it would burn, if we tasted it, it would be full-bodied, like salted meat. If we took it between our lips, it would fill our mouths. If we smelled it, it'd have the scent of a horse. If it were a flower, it would smell like a daisy, not a red rose. (Pamuk, 2002: 227)

The reference to senses other than the sight indicates that the relevance of form is not restricted to a visual representation but refers to all forms of representation. In that sense the blind miniaturists do offer a definition of the colour red as they enumerate different forms in which the colour red would appear, echoing the representation of the colours through words in *My Name is Red*. These different forms offer a representation of the colour red as 'an-other' thus allowing its definition as dissemination of meaning. In a similar vein, the representation of colours in a miniature painting, despite the lack of formal accuracy, emerges as a possible definition of the colour red as it enables its re-invention as 'an-other'. Thus miniature painting's claim to depict ideal meanings that are independent of forms proves to be problematic. The forms in which the colours appear, far from ensuring an ultimate and essential definition, result in the creation of a space of difference and deferral where the definition of the colours is constantly re-invented.

The definition of the identity of the colour red is only possible through its different representations which rather than offering a reconciliatory answer enable a perpetual displacement where its identity will be defined through *différance*. As the blind miniaturists contend:

‘The meaning of color is that it is there before us and we see it,’ said the other. ‘*Red cannot be explained to he who cannot see.*’ ‘To deny God’s existence, victims of Satan maintain that God is not visible to us,’ said the blind miniaturist who’d rendered the horse. ‘Yet, He appears to those who can see,’ said the other master. ‘It is for this reason that the Koran states that the blind and the seeing are not equal.’ (Pamuk, 2002: 228, *my emphasis*)

The difference between the blind and the seeing is not restricted to the actual faculty of sight but refers to the perception of forms in which the colour red would appear. Whether it is perceived through sight, hearing or smell it is the formal representations that allow the production of meaning as dissemination by re-inventing its object as ‘an-other’.

The first time the colour red appears in *My Name is Red* is in a miniature painting by the great master Bihzad that depicts a scene from Nizami’s *Hüsrev and Shirin*. The painting shows the jealous son of Hüsrev murdering his father while he is asleep next to his beautiful wife. As the murderer, who is the narrator in the chapter, explains despite the minute depiction of various objects present in the room as well as the beautiful wife, Shirin, sleeping next to Hüsrev, the scene focuses on the loneliness of the dying man through the depiction of the red rug.

Every detail, the finely wrought wall, window and frame ornamentation, the curves and the circular designs in the red rug, the color of the silent scream...The indifference of the painting’s beauty and of the world to your death, the fact of your being totally alone in death despite the presence of your wife, this is the inescapable meaning that strikes you. (Pamuk, 2002: 21)

The representation of the colour red on the rug far from assuring an essential and predetermined meaning of the colour indicates how its identity is defined through the various forms in which it appears. While in this scene the colour red represents the loneliness of the dying man, it later on appears in *My Name is Red* as the red ink, thus connoting creativity and production.

‘Purely for red,’ when he presented me with the Mongol inkpot as a gift, and his polite and demure habit of sitting before me with his knees mindfully together... (Pamuk, 2002: 26)

Black presents Enishte Effendi an inkpot that is reserved for the use of red ink only. Although designed for creative purposes the inkpot turns into an instrument of murder in the hands of the murderer. When the murderer hits Enishte Effendi with it, the red ink inside the inkpot mixes with Enishte’s blood, making the two inseparable.

Raising the inkpot, he struck me on the head with all his strength...He raised the inkpot again and brought it down upon my head...My thoughts, what I saw, my memories, my eyes, all of it, merging together, became fear. I could see no one color and realized *that all colors had become red*. What I thought was my blood was red ink; what I thought was ink on his hands was my flowing blood...Perhaps because I could neither understand nor listen to him, perhaps because I took no pleasure in looking into his bloodshot eyes, he struck my head once more. His face and his entire body had become bright red from the ink splattering out of the inkpot, and I suppose, from the blood splattering out of me. (Pamuk, 2002: 209, *my emphasis*)

The inability to distinguish between ink and blood underlines the significant role of form in the production of meaning. Depending on the different forms in which it appears the colour red gains a distinct signification. The ambivalence that results from the mixing of ink and blood, while undermining the assumption of a predetermined and inherent meaning that is independent of forms, highlights the ambiguity that marks all attempts to provide an ultimate definition. Representation rather than ensuring an eventual closure by providing a definite definition enables the definition of meaning as a perpetual difference and deferral. The meaning of the colour red thus remains ambiguous and fluid, possible only as perpetual displacement.

Alongside red, there are other colours used throughout the narrative, which not only hint at the parallel between the novel and miniature painting but

also underline the production of meaning with the different forms in which they appear. For example the colour pink is particularly significant as it gives away a social code that is specific to the era where the novel is set. During the Ottoman era non-Muslim minorities were forced to wear clothes of a certain colour that would allow them to be easily distinguished in public. This practice is made explicit in the narrative through Esther the Jewish clothier who also works as a matchmaker. The first time Black sees Esther, it is with her pink dress that he identifies her.

As soon as we entered the street, I was about to swiftly mount my steed and disappear down the narrow way like a fabled horseman, never to return again, when an enormous woman, a Jewess dressed all in pink and carrying a bundle, appeared out of nowhere and accosted me. (Pamuk, 2002: 40)

Without prior knowledge, Black can recognize Esther's Jewish identity due to the colour pink she has to wear. Another instance of the colour pink occurs when it enables Black to spot Esther among the crowds thanks to her pink dress.

Esther was all atwitter in the pink dress she was forced to wear as a Jew, with her large and lively body, her mouth which never stopped moving, and her eyebrows and eyes which twitched madly and signalled to me. (Pamuk, 2002: 73)

The pink outfit that Esther has to wear thus gains different meanings because of the social and temporal settings in which it appears. The form in which the colour pink appears is inextricably linked to the social codes of the era and thus affects the possible meanings that would be generated. Esther's pink outfit demonstrates how the art of miniature, regardless of the ban on representational painting, uses distinct formal strategies in order to generate certain conclusions. If Esther were represented in a miniature painting, she wouldn't have any distinctive facial features but her pink coat would allow the viewer to identify her as Jewish.

Pamuk too in *My Name is Red* refrains from providing any distinctive facial features and instead differentiates Esther by drawing attention to the significance of the colour pink that she is wearing.

The colours of Shekure's outfits too are highly significant as they are used to communicate distinct messages. When she first allows Black to see her on the window of the house, Shekure is wearing purple, as it is the colour of mourning at the period where the novel is set. The message Shekure wants to give to Black is that she is still mourning for her missing husband. While preparing for their actual meeting, Shekure tries on different colours:

My vest of red broadcloth suited me, but I also wanted to don my mother's purple blouse which had been part of her trousseau. I took out the long pistachio-colored robe my grandmother had embroidered with flowers, and tried it on, but didn't please me...Over it all, of course, I was going to wear my fox fur-lined street robe, but at the last minute I changed my mind, and silently crossing the hall, I removed the very long and loose azure-colored woollen robe that my mother had given me and put it on. Just then I heard a noise at the door and fell into panic: Black was leaving! I quickly removed my mother's old robe and put on the fur-lined *red* one: it was tight around the bustline, but I liked it. I then donned the softest and whitest veil, lowering it over my face. (Pamuk, 2002: 176, *my emphasis*)

Red, green, blue and white are all among the colours that Shekure puts on. Her final choice, however, is significant as the colour red, apart from its resonance within the narrative, is also the colour of wedding gowns at the time. Later on in the narrative she is also seen wearing the red wedding gown when marrying Black. This time the colour red represents merrier events:

Shekure, dressed in a bright-red wedding gown with pink bridal streamers flowing from her hair to feet, emerged amid cries... (Pamuk, 2002: 243)

The different forms in which the colour red appears indicate the impossibility of an ideal and essential meaning to which the art of miniature lays

claim. The identity of the colours, their meanings, can only be represented through the forms in which they appear. These representations, far from ensuring a final and fixed definition, allow definition as a constant displacement. Each representation re-invents the colour as ‘an-other’ which only enhances further the possibilities of its definition through difference and deferral.

Another stylistic method that Pamuk adopts from miniature painting is the anonymous depiction of human figures. Aiming to achieve the ideal vision of God and in order to erase the artist’s individual gaze, the miniaturist is not allowed to depict what he sees. Indicative of the anonymity of his subjects to God, the figures in a miniature painting are devoid of any distinctive facial features. Pamuk adopts the same strategy in *My Name is Red* and does not offer any detailed depiction of the facial features of the characters. Echoing the Venetian and Hoja who were unable to use their appearances to define their individual identities, the figures of *My Name is Red* too are deprived of any distinctive physical characteristics.

Throughout the narrative there are only few instances where we learn details about the faces of Black and Shekure. Details about Black’s appearance are revealed when Enishte Effendi meets him for the first time after twelve years, yet no information is provided regarding the details of his facial features: ‘He shares a likeness with his father, whom I’ve seen once or twice: He’s tall and thin, and makes slightly nervous yet becoming gestures with his arms and hands.’ (Pamuk, 2002: 26)

In the same way Shekure’s face too remains mostly indeterminate for the reader. Black, who is unable to see her face due to the social constraints of the time, can only rely on his memories from twelve years ago. Even the scene that

depicts the moment when Black finally sees Shekure's face is dedicated to the description of the surrounding environment rather than her appearance. Shekure's face is represented as 'an-other' with the depictions of the surrounding elements.

Just as I was thinking such thoughts, the window's iced-over shutters opened with a loud burst, as if they'd exploded, and after twelve years, I saw my beloved's stunning face among snowy branches, framed by the window whose icy trim shone brightly in the sunlight. Was my dark-eyed beloved looking at me or at another life beyond me? I couldn't tell whether she was sad or smiling or smiling sadly. Foolish horse, heed not my heart, slow down! I calmly twisted my saddle again, fixing my desirous stare for as long as possible, until her *gaunt, elegant and mysterious face* disappeared behind the branches. Much later, after opening her letter and seeing the illustration within, I thought how my visit to her at the window on horseback closely resembled that moment, pictured a thousand times, in which Hüsrev visits Shirin beneath her window – only in our case, there was that melancholy tree between us. (Pamuk, 2002: 41, *my emphasis*)

The comparison that Black establishes between their encounter and the scene from *Hüsrev and Shirin* reminds a painting that he had done years before to confess his love to Shekure. In that painting, unable to depict their faces Black uses colours to show that Hüsrev represented him and Shirin symbolized Shekure.

After falling in love with me, he made a copy for himself. But this time in place of Hüsrev and Shirin, he portrayed himself and me, Black and Shekure. If it weren't for the captions beneath the figures, only I would've known who the man and maiden in the picture were, because sometimes when we were joking around, he'd depict us in the same manner and color: I all in blue, he all in red. And if this weren't indication enough, he'd also written our names beneath the figures. (Pamuk, 2002: 47)

The painting that Black makes to declare his love to Shekure depicts them as Hüsrev and Shirin, protagonists of the well-known epic. The specific use of colours allows Black to produce specific meanings as through the colour red that he uses for himself he establishes a parallel between himself and Hüsrev whose face is also depicted in red. Thus, just like Shirin who can recognize Hüsrev through the red spot, Shekure too can recognize Black in this painting where they

are represented through the colours blue and red respectively and without any distinctive facial features. The painting offers a definition of their identities not through an accurate depiction of their facial features but through colours that represent them. Shekure and Black thus become 'what they are' through the association that the colours establish with Shirin and Hüsrev.

In addition to their representation through the colours, another level of representation enables the significance of Black's painting: the painting of Shirin and Hüsrev. Black's painting is an imitation of the painting that depicts Shirin and Hüsrev. His use of the colours blue and red, which would otherwise remain insignificant, only acquire their significance in reference to that painting where Shirin and Hüsrev are depicted in red and blue. Thus the identities of Black and Shekure are defined in imitation of the painting of Shirin and Hüsrev. While within the framework of Pamuk's oeuvre imitation emerges as the only possible form of representation through deferral and difference, Black adheres to a metaphysical definition of imitation where it is accorded an inferior and derivative position as opposed to the primacy of the 'original'. Therefore in order to make his painting an 'original' that portrays their singular identities, Black inscribes his and Shekure's names underneath the figures.

The inscription of their proper names, however, far from ensuring the singularity that Black wishes to attain, serves rather to confirm Pamuk's perspective. In its attempt to refer to a singular individual identity the inscription of their proper names is similar to the purposes of the signature. While it is used to mark an individual identity by singling it out from others, Derrida highlights the conundrum that defines signature. He notes that in order for signature to

operate, that is to be recognized as the signature belonging to a singular identity, it needs to be repeated.

In order to function, that is, in order to be legible, a signature must have a repeatable, iterable, imitable form; it must be able to detach itself from the present and singular intention of its production. It is its sameness which, in altering its identity and singularity, divides the seal. (Derrida, 1984; 328)

The possibility of repetition is what defines signature, as it needs to be iterable in order to be recognized as the same. Iterability, thus, while threatening the singularity that the signature is trying to represent, emerges as the condition that makes signature possible. Since for Derrida repetition is never the reproduction of the same but is a process of deferral and difference as representation, signature rather than securing a predetermined meaning, emerges as the space where dissemination of meaning becomes possible. Signature thus rather than ensuring closure of meaning, emerges as the space where it is re-invented as ‘an-other’ with each repetition. Consequently Black’s attempt to capture an inherent meaning of their identities with the inscription of names not only proves futile while enhancing further dissemination of meaning through perpetual displacement.

B. The Identity of the Artist

On the diegetic level of *My Name is Red* the positioning of miniature art and Western style painting as binaries – categorized mainly according to formal accuracy and the use of perspective – allows a fruitful line of inquiry. The aesthetic framework allows Pamuk to establish the pairs origin/imitation, self/other as reverberations of the East/West dichotomy and to enquire into the validity of these categories. The difference between the two categories is not limited to stylistic features but can also be observed in the role assigned to the artist. Personal style, authenticity and signature, all traits that are cherished in the Western painting, are presented as the main artistic preoccupations that the miniature art aims to abolish. In this section using this aesthetic perspective as a parallel for the discussion of identity, I will analyse how the stylistic and ideological differences between the two traditions of painting insinuate the wider East/West dichotomy.

The divergence between the Western tradition of painting and the art of the miniature in terms of their treatment of the artist can be summarized as follows: while the former wishes the artist to be his ‘self’, the latter expects the opposite and asks the artist not to be his ‘self’. That is to say in the Western tradition the presence of the artist needs to be seen in the work he creates, he needs to mark the work with his singular identity as opposed to the miniaturist who needs to remain anonymous, eliminating all traces of personal style. Taking into account the apparent distinction between the two approaches, the question that emerges is: What does it mean to be one ‘self’?

Within the framework of Turkish experience of modernity, to be one 'self' signifies a definition of a 'pure' and 'authentic' identity that would conform to the ideal set by the Western examples. A. H. Tanpınar, one of the greatest influences on Pamuk, places specific emphasis on the word 'self'. Tanpınar, building on the fantasy of a unified 'selfhood' defined by the 'West', contends that the only way to reach that ideal is to be 'our selves'. The double bind of Tanpınar's position is explicit in the fact that the desire to reach an authentic 'self' is defined vis-à-vis an ideal other. The criterion to be 'our self' for Tanpınar is defined through the likeness to the ideal other symbolized by the categorical 'West'. In line with the Lacanian mirror stage, Tanpınar's definition of the 'self' requires identification with the ideal mirror image, which is symbolized by the unified and total definition of Western identity. However, since a complete identification is never possible with the fantasy of an ideal mirror image, the formation of a 'self' as an authentic and originary position is doomed to fail.

Rather than reversing the binary positions of the East/West perceived as self/other Pamuk shows 'the authentic as the always already inauthentic' (Mani, 2007: 168). The mirror image in Pamuk, is not a singular and ideal fantasy but is always already fragmented and multiple. In *My Name is Red* using the different stylistic details adopted by miniature art and the Western portrait he explores the ramifications of the attempt to obtain a definition of the 'self' in both traditions. I will discuss the various strategies of miniature art that aim to obliterate the individuality of the artist and their effectiveness in establishing a distinction from the Western style of painting. Using this aesthetic framework as a starting point I will examine the possibility of a pure and authentic definition of the 'self'.

The miniature tradition perceives the artist not as an autonomous individual but rather as a transmitter who repeats what has been handed down to him from previous artists. The miniaturist is expected to paint not what he sees but an ideal vision of the world, which would contain the essential meaning of things independent of forms. As a result the miniaturist is not allowed to ‘create’ as that capacity is reserved for God only. Instead his work needs to get closer to the memory of an ideal vision of the world.

Let it not be forgotten that in the Glorious Koran, ‘creator’ is one of the attributes of Allah. It is Allah who is creative, who brings that which is not into existence, who gives life to the lifeless. No one ought to compete with Him. The greatest of sins is committed by painters who presume to do what He does, who claim to be as creative as He. (Pamuk, 2002: 193)

In order to prevent the miniaturist from ‘creating’ the miniatures depict not what the artist sees but rather what he had memorized through years of training. Any traces that would show the individuality of the artist in the painting is considered to be a flaw, a divergence from the perfection it is trying to achieve.

My Name is Red with the individual chapters assigned to different narrators appears to challenge this notion of anonymity, as each narrator is free to use his/her own personal style when they are narrating. On a closer look, however, the chapters of the narrative follow a coherent tone where no personal style can be observed. It is only through the titles that indicate the name of the narrator that one can distinguish between the different narrators of *My Name is Red*.⁶⁰ Their distinct voices cannot be detected despite the fact that each narrator is assigned individual chapters where they can be their ‘selves’.

⁶⁰ It is important to note that in the Turkish edition the titles of the chapters are indicated at the top of each page so that the reader can identify who is speaking while reading without having to go back to the title of the chapter. This feature, which is absent in the English edition, reinforces my suggestion regarding the lack of any distinctive features among the distinct narrators.

The murderer has a distinct position as he speaks both with his 'real' name and as the murderer; when he speaks with his 'murderer' identity his chapters are entitled 'I will be called a Murderer' so that his name remains concealed. As a miniaturist who has been trained to erase all traces of his personal style, the murderer challenges the readers to identify him from his words:

Try to discover who I am from my choice of words and colors, as attentive people like yourselves might examine footprints to catch a thief. This, in turn, brings us to the issue of "style", which is now of widespread interest: Does a miniaturist, ought a miniaturist, have his own personal style? A use of color, a voice of his own? (Pamuk, 2002: 20)

The murderer cannot be identified throughout the narrative, as there are no clues in his narrative style that would give away his identity. What makes the murderer's case different from the other narrators is the fact that despite wishing to remain anonymous as a murderer he wishes his skills as a miniaturist to be acknowledged. Right before attacking Enishte Effendi, the murderer wishes to know if he has a singular style:

'Do I have a style of my own?'
I thought tears would flow from my eyes. With all the gentleness, sympathy and kindness I could muster, I hastened to tell him what I believed to be the truth:
'You are the most talented, divinely inspired artist with the most enchanted touch and eye for detail that I've seen in all my sixty years...'
'Agreed, but I know you're not wise enough to appreciate the mystery of my skill,' he said. 'You're lying, now, because you're afraid of me. Describe, once again, the character of my methods.'
'Your pen selects the right line seemingly of its own accord, as if without your touch...'
'True, but I'm not sure that amounts to praise. Try again.'
'There's no miniaturist who knows the consistency of paint and its secrets as well as you do...'
'Yes, and what else?'
'You know you're the greatest of painters after Bihzad and Mir Seyyid Ali.'... With this, I thought I might be able to escape this nightmare thanks to a new expression – this word 'style'. (Pamuk, 2002: 203)

The murderer insists that Enishte Effendi tells him what specific details make him different from the other miniaturists. Not contending with the general qualities that Enishte Effendi lists to praise him, the murderer wishes to learn the particulars of his style. Despite years of training to conceal his individual style, the murderer still longs to be singular through his art. As a murderer, however, he is of a different opinion, because any signs of individual style would give away his identity as the murderer. To make sure that he did not leave any traces of his style the murderer returns to the crime scene:

As I returned to this fire-ravaged area night after night to ascertain whether I'd left behind any traces that might betray me, questions of style increasingly arose in my head. What was venerated as style was nothing more than an imperfection or flaw that revealed the guilty hand... Now, snow covered and erased all the clues that might have been interpreted as signature, proving that Allah concurred with Bihzad and me on the issue of style and signature. (Pamuk, 2002: 22)

The murderer's earlier desire to learn the particulars of his art fades away when it comes to the traces that he might have left behind at the crime scene. He claims that in order to conceal his identity he has adopted a distinct voice that would be suitable for a murderer.

I've adopted a second voice, one befitting a murderer, so that I might still carry on as though my old life continued. I am speaking now in this derisive and devious second voice, which I keep out of my regular life. From time to time, of course, you'll hear my familiar, regular voice, which would've remained my only voice had I not become a murderer... Let no one try to associate these two voices, I have no individual style or flaws in artistry to betray my hidden persona. Indeed, I believe that style, or for that matter, anything that serves to distinguish one artist from another, is a flaw – not individual character, as some arrogantly claim. (Pamuk, 2002: 119)

The murderer distinguishes between his two 'voices': one that belongs to the artist and the other that belongs to the murderer that he has recently become. He aims to show that the difference between the two voices, the impossibility to

find a common point between them is an indication of the lack of personal style. The two distinct voices that he can adopt show that he does not have a ‘flaw’ that would operate as his signature leading to the identification of his voice as the murderer.

The invention of a ‘second’ voice, while aiming to conceal the murderer’s identity, also defines his ‘self’ as primary and original. While the second voice is derivative, his primary ‘self’ emerges as the originary source that contains an inherent definition of the elements that make the murderer ‘what he is’. This view is further emphasized when all the miniaturists are asked to draw a horse in order to identify the murderer. Trying to conceal his real identity the murderer becomes ‘an-other’: ‘I had to depict a new horse this time. I thought of completely different things. I “restrained” myself and became another’ (Pamuk, 2002: 339).⁶¹ The murderer implies that there is an essential and singular quality that could be defined as his ‘self’ and he needs to make an effort in order to conceal it, which is what he is trying to do by adopting a second voice. He thus re-invents his ‘self’ as ‘an-other’ but this representation far from concealing his real identity, makes him ‘what he is’.

Before analysing the implications of personal style and what it means to have a singular style that reflects the singular ‘self’ I wish to discuss the different methods that the art of miniature uses to obliterate the individual traces of the miniaturists. The initial training of the miniaturist consists of joining a school as an apprentice, where they copy the works of the previous masters. As a method to obliterate the artist’s individual style the training process expects the miniaturists to produce accurate copies that imitate the original work with perfection. Thus the

⁶¹ In the Turkish original the emphasis on the word self is more evident. I propose the following translation: ‘I “restrained myself” in order not to be myself’ (Pamuk, 1998; 321, *my translation*).

imitation process aims to prevent the inclusion of individual traces, which are considered to be flaws.

The miniature tradition thus posits original and copy as binaries; while original work is condemned on grounds of its indication of personal style and the creativity of the artist; the copy is acceptable because it does not involve any individual sign. The imitation of the previous masters would prevent the miniaturists from creating their own individual styles. Imitation, in other words, far from having any negative connotations, is celebrated as the only method of artistic production.

Imitation is also a significant term within the framework of Turkish identity. Unlike the miniature tradition, however, within the framework of Turkish modernization imitation connotes a derivative copy that is inferior to the original. Turkish identity emerges as an imitation, a copy of the original Western selfhood. As opposed to the West/Europe, which symbolizes an authentic source of modernity the Turkish/Eastern counterpart is condemned to remain a mere copy. As Meltem Ahıska notes:

The Turkish hegemonic imaginary has been structured within an encounter with the West, which imposed a “model” for modernity in its colonialist and imperialistic history, and which has always reproduced itself through insufficient ‘copies’. (Ahıska, 2003: 357)

Focusing on the debates regarding the Kemalist modernization movement implemented in Turkey, Ahıska observes that both supporters and critics of this modernization process share in common:

the reference point of the implicit model. Whether the history of Westernization is designated as a success or failure, both versions imply that Turkey, which ‘imitated’ the West, is an exceptional case: an inept vehicle for Western modernization. It is bound to be a ‘copy’. (Ahıska, 2003: 358)

While the formation of Turkish identity is thus defined within the imitation/copy dichotomy where the Western identity represents the ideal unified definition of selfhood. Echoing the Lacanian mirror stage, the formation of a Turkish 'self' is linked to identification with the ideal unified mirror image symbolized by the Western definition of the 'self'. Such positioning of the two results in a process of identification that is doomed to fail, thus condemning the Turkish identity to the inferior position of 'copy'.

Pamuk, however, calls into question this metaphysical definition of imitation where the original is prioritized as the source of an ideal and homogenous meaning as opposed to the imitation that is derivative and secondary. Pamuk, following Derrida, problematizes the definition of an originary meaning as presence, as the depiction of presence requires signs, which operate within a system of difference. Thus even the original, which is considered to be pure and singular, is represented through signs which produce its meaning through difference and deferral. For Pamuk the presence of meaning is not a long lost abstraction, an ideal totality, but is an impossibility, as meaning is constantly produced through representation, which splits it as it is being repeated. In other words 'presence can be articulated only if it is *fragmented* into discourse' (Spivak, 1997: lxvi); it is through that fragmentation that meaning as perpetual displacement becomes possible.

Thus the repetition of presence as imitation is never the exact reproduction of the same but is only possible through representation that introduces the possibility of fiction and modification through difference and deferral. The imitation process inevitably evokes the original/copy pair, which hints at the East/West dichotomy. Bhabha addresses the process of imitation in relation with

the postcolonial context to explore how it operates for both the colonizer and the colonized. Bhabha underlines how the imitation of the colonizer, far from confirming its status as the original, offers a fragmented definition by re-inventing it as ‘an-other’. Bhabha argues that imitation, by introducing ambivalence, creates a space where the original can no longer have control over.

The colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. The authority of that mode of colonial discourse that I have called mimicry is therefore stricken by an indeterminacy: mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal. Mimicry is, thus the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which ‘appropriates’ the Other as it visualizes power. (Bhabha, 2010: 122)

As Bhabha notes, imitation never ensures the reproduction of the same by preventing the production of meaning as presence but rather produces meaning as dissemination while also displacing the ideal definition of the original. Within this framework the miniaturists’ aim to control meaning through imitation becomes problematic. As Bhabha argues, imitation of the works of the previous masters, by prompting ambivalence encourages multiplicity of meaning rather than ensuring a prior and original meaning.

In Homi Bhabha’s terms, imitation is similar to translation in the sense that rather than acknowledging the priority of the original it displays how the original is open to modification through representation. Consequently the miniaturists’ imitation is a process of translation, which ‘puts together the traces of certain other meanings or discourse’ and ‘gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation.’ (Bhabha, 1998a: 211)

The name is another important tool that Pamuk uses to raise questions regarding the possibility of being one 'self'. Both in the miniature tradition and in *My Name is Red* naming plays a significant role as it underlines an attempt to define 'who one is'. The naming process, similar to the signature, by singling out its subject, aims to differentiate it from others thus offering a definition of the 'self'. Conventionally it operates as one of the most intimate and essential constituents of the definition of the 'self'. Throughout *My Name is Red* this role of the name and the naming process is challenged both in relation with the art of miniature and in the structural details of the narrative.

The extensive use of the name throughout the narrative far from endorsing its conventional role as the provider of a singular and authentic definition of the 'self' challenges it in various respects. The significant role of the name is made explicit in not only the title of the narrative but also in the individual chapters of the narrators. This abundant use of the name throughout the narrative creates a space where its role as the provider of a unique representation of the 'self' is called into question. Does the name have such an essential connection to the 'self'? What does the name represent?

In *My Name is Red* not only the title of the narrative but also the titles of the fifty-nine chapters are composed following the same pattern: 'My name is...'. This pattern operates as an initial encounter with the reader; it allows the reader to identify the narrator of each chapter while also letting each narrator's voice be heard in the first person narration. The emphasis this pattern puts on the name of each narrator clashes with the anonymity that is expected of the miniaturists.

While the name distinguishes between the different narrators, it fails to do so for the chapters as the chapters with the same narrator have the same titles. The

names of the titles are repeated every time the same narrator is speaking. Thus throughout the narrative there are various chapters that have the same title which, while challenging the singularity of the name, indicate the indispensable role of repetition. In order for the narrators of the chapters to be identified, the same title needs to be repeated. The repetition of the names of the chapters shows that the name far from representing a pure and unique essence unravels the impossibility to capture such an essence because the name, as Derrida notes, is only possible through repetition:

It is because the proper names are already no longer proper names, because their production is their obliteration, because the erasure and the imposition of the letter are originary, because they do not supervene upon a proper inscription; it is because the proper name has never been, as the unique appellation reserved for the presence of a unique being, anything but the original myth of a transparent legibility present under the obliteration; it is because the proper name was never possible except through its functioning within a classification and therefore within a system of differences, within a writing retaining the traces of difference, that the interdict was possible, could come into play, and, when the time came, as we shall see, could be transgressed; transgressed, that is to say restored to the obliteration and the non-self-sameness [*non-propriété*] at the origin. (Derrida, 1997: 109)

This indispensable repetition process introduces the possibility of modification through deferral and difference. Thus the proper name, rather than ensuring an originary presence, re-invents it by incorporating the possibility of modification in each repetition.

The murderer's chapters do not follow the usual pattern of 'My name is...' as that would reveal his identity. But they are not entitled 'My name is the murderer' either. Instead the pattern used for the title of those chapters where the murderer is the narrator is: 'I will be called a murderer'. The use of passive voice and the future tense indicates how the name is a form of representation that is assigned to the 'self' and not an essential and inherent component of the 'self'.

Not coincidentally the same passive pattern, this time in the present tense, is used in the titles of the chapters where the three miniaturists are the narrators. Using this pattern that highlights the inorganic tie of the name to the 'self' Pamuk explores the implications of the prohibition of being one 'self' in the miniature tradition. In addition to the 'I am called...' model, in the English translation double-quotation marks are used to give further emphasis to the inorganic link of the names: 'I am called "Butterfly"'. The use of double-quotation marks draws attention to an important feature of the miniaturists' training, which aims to obliterate the inscription of the individuality of the artists. The miniature artist is not allowed to be him 'self' as he is expected to depict an ideal world rather than the world as he sees it. As a result of the ban on individual style, the miniaturists are not allowed to sign their work. The proper name and its inscription through the signature symbolize the personal trace that would challenge the anonymity of the painting. This ban reveals how for the miniaturists the proper name is equal to the inscription of an authentic and singular 'self'.

Based on the equation of the name with an originary definition of the 'self' the miniaturists implement various bans to prevent the proper name from revealing that essential 'self'. Master Osman of *My Name is Red* prefers to eliminate the proper name altogether and assigns the artists new names:

The story behind these workshop names, which bound us to another like a secret pact, was simple: During our apprenticeships, when Osman the miniaturist had newly graduated from assistant master to the level of master, we all shared a great respect and admiration and love for him...Early each morning, as was demanded of apprentices, one of us would go to the master's home, and following respectfully behind him on the way to the workshop, carry his pen and brush box, his bag and his portfolio full of papers....so the great master decided that each of us would be assured a specified day of the week...Later, our great master meaningfully and lovingly changed our names from 'Tuesday' to 'Olive,' from 'Friday' to 'Stork,' and from 'Sunday' to 'Butterfly,' renaming the dearly departed as 'Elegant' in allusion to the finesse of his gilding work. (Pamuk, 2002: 118)

Master Osman gives the miniaturists nicknames in order to prevent them from leaving any personal traces that would make their work identifiable. What needs to be noticed, however, is the logic that Master Osman follows while assigning this new set of names. Despite aiming to prevent them from leaving traces of their ‘selves’ Master Osman nevertheless takes into account the distinct style of each miniaturist to differentiate him from the others. The naming of Elegant Effendi illustrates how even in the attempt to erase traces of their individual styles Master Osman still follows their personal styles as a clue for the new set of names.

Master Osman assigns the miniaturists different nicknames based on the assumption that their real names *are* the symbol of an original and authentic definition of their ‘selves’. Pamuk not only undermines the definition of the ‘self’ as an original essence but also problematizes the definition of the name as the unique repetition of that originary essence. For the name to operate it needs to be repeated which inevitably introduces the possibility of fiction. As the naming process as implemented by Master Osman shows, the new names represent the artists by re-inventing them as ‘an-other’. The new names do not conceal an originary definition of their identities but rather make the artists ‘what they are’ by representing them as ‘an-other’ in reference to their personal styles.

The problematic role of the name to determine one’s identity is also relevant for the construction of Turkish identity. The definition of a Turkish ‘self’ is primarily limited to the boundaries of a metaphysical framework where it is defined as the derivative imitation as opposed to the originary Western identity. Consequently identification with the ideal mirror image emerges as the only

possible way to obtain an authentic Turkish identity. The impossibility to identify with a fantasy of unity condemns the definition of the Turkish identity to remain a derivative copy. Within the Lacanian framework, the name operates similar to the ideal mirror image with which the ‘self’ needs to identify:

Because of this gap, the subject cannot ever fully and immediately identify with his symbolic mask or title; the subject’s questioning of his symbolic title is what hysteria is about: ‘Why am I what you’re saying that I am?’ Or, to quote Shakespeare’s Juliet: ‘Why am I that name?’...Hysteria emerges when a subject starts to question or to feel discomfort in his or her symbolic identity...*Richard II* is Shakespeare’s ultimate play about hystericization (in contrast to *Hamlet*, the ultimate play about obsession). Its topic is the progressive questioning by the king of his own kingship – What is it that makes me king? What remains of me if the symbolic title ‘king’ is taken away? (Žižek, 2006: 34)

Žižek’s example is similar to the operation of the name within the framework of the miniaturists’ tradition, which is symbolic of the formation of the Turkish identity. The name operates as the ideal mirror image, through which the meaning of the ‘self’ is defined as originary and unique. Failure to identify with that ideal mirror image, however, results in hysteria as the ‘self’ becomes unable to obtain a coherent definition of ‘what he is’. During the formation of the Republic in order to define a new identity for the ‘self’ of the nation-state, the name ‘Turk’ was designated as the ideal mirror image. The name ‘Turk’ symbolized a unified and originary definition of the ‘self’ that would provide the new nation with an authentic definition of its identity. Identification with the mirror image, symbolized by the name ‘Turk’ was indispensable in order to construct the Turkish identity as an originary presence. In order to enable identification with the ideal mirror image that manifests itself in the name ‘Turk’, many slogans have been circulated, one of the most well-known being: ‘Ne mutlu Türküm diyene’ (How happy is the one who says ‘I am a Turk’).

While promoting identification with the name ‘Turk’ in order to obtain a unified and originary definition of the ‘self’, the slogan undermines its validity with the verb to ‘say’. Saying the name ‘Turk’ would inevitably represent it within language, which is detrimental to the desire to define identity as an originary presence. The representation of the ‘self’ in language with the name ‘Turk’ would thus introduce the possibility of modification through difference and deferral. The name cannot operate as an ideal mirror image that symbolizes an ultimate totalizing definition of the ‘self’ because it can only represent presence by re-inventing it as ‘an-other’. The name thus, far from enabling identification emerges as the space where meaning is produced as *différance*. The naming of the nation, which was intended to be ‘concomitant with the suppression of difference’ (Mani, 2007: 161) by providing a totalising mirror image, results in becoming the space of displacement.

The ineffectiveness of the methods used to obliterate the singular style of the miniaturists is disclosed when while trying to identify the murderer Master Osman explains in details all the specific characteristics of Olive, Butterfly and Stork. In three different sections entitled ‘The Attributes of ...’ Master Osman tells the features of each miniaturist, which shows how regardless of the years of training that aimed to erase traces of individual style, the artists, nevertheless, produce distinct works that can be traced back to them. Looking at a painting, Master Osman can easily distinguish which miniaturist painted each specific detail:

I spent some time hunched over this crowded picture pointing out to Black which of my miniaturists had drawn the plane tree (Stork), the ships and houses (Olive), and the kite and flowers (Butterfly). (Pamuk, 2002: 304)

In *My Name is Red* the miniature tradition's reluctance towards the inscription of singular identity is juxtaposed with the secret book of Enishte Effendi, which would 'contain Our Sultan's portrait painted in the Venetian style' (Pamuk, 2002: 134). What makes the Western tradition of painting alluring for Enishte Effendi is more than the use of perspective and the lack of a background story, the realistic portraits. During his visit to Venice, the portraits that he sees inspire Enishte Effendi for a similar project. According to Enishte Effendi what makes the Western style portrait so alluring is its capacity to represent the singular identity of the individual. The resemblance between the subject and the portrait is for Enishte Effendi the proof of the inscription of the singular identity. Describing to Black the portraits he has seen in Venice, Enishte Effendi focuses on their successful capturing of individuality:

Each one was different from the next. They were distinctive, unique human faces! ... In all of Venice, rich and influential men wanted their portraits painted as a symbol, a memento of their lives and a sign of their riches, power and influence – so they might always be there, standing before us, announcing their existence, nay, their individuality and distinction. (Pamuk, 2002: 130)

According to Enishte Effendi the Venetian portraits bring to the foreground what has been suppressed in miniature painting: individuality. Enishte Effendi thus assumes that the exact repetition of the physical appearance of the individual in a portrait painting would capture the essence of his singular identity as an originary presence. His reaction to one of the portrait paintings, however, indicates a distinct perspective by challenging the equation of representation with the exact repetition of the same:

More than anything, the image was of an individual, somebody like myself. It was an infidel, of course, not one of us. As I stared at him, though, I felt as if I resembled him. Yet he didn't resemble me at all. He had a full round face that seemed to lack cheekbones, and

moreover, he had no trace of my marvelous chin. Though he didn't look anything like me, as I gazed upon the picture, for some reason, my heart fluttered *as if it were my own portrait*. (Pamuk, 2002: 31, *my emphasis*)

The resemblance that Enishte Effendi shares with the portrait despite the lack of physical similarity, underlines how the portrait painting is not a mere reproduction of the features of the individual. The portrait painting is not an exact repetition of the individual face but is a representation that re-invents its subject as 'an-other'. Regardless of the formal correspondence, representation is never a repetition of the same but is a process of deferral and difference that enables dissemination of meaning. Representing presence involves its fragmentation through re-invention, which rather than ensuring closure enables meaning as perpetual displacement. As Derrida notes representation does not happen to an existing presence but is born from it:

Representation *in the abyss* of presence is not an accident of presence; the desire of presence is, on the contrary, born from the abyss (the indefinite multiplication) of representation, from the representation of representation, etc. (Derrida, 1997: 163)

As a result, both miniature painting and portrait painting, despite the different formal conventions that they adhere to, are representations that repeat not to reinforce a primary original 'self' but rather to enable a definition of the 'self' as a constant displacement through difference and deferral.

What appeals to Enishte Effendi in the portrait painting, is not the exact repetition of the facial features of its subject, but rather the representation of the desire to be one 'self'. The painting, through the realistic portrayal of the facial features of its subject, communicates the desire for a singular individual identity.

'However, it was as if I too wanted to feel extraordinary, different and unique,' he said. As if prodded by the Devil, he felt himself strongly

drawn to what he feared. 'How should I say it? It's as if this were a sin of desire, like growing arrogant before God, like considering oneself of utmost importance, like situating oneself at the center of the world.' (Pamuk, 2002: 132)

It is the communication of the desire to feel unique that draws Enishte Effendi to the portrait painting. Even the realistic portrayal of the individual in a portrait painting that Enishte Effendi believes would enable a definite and final meaning, emerges as the space of displacement where the re-invention of the subject as 'an-other' leads to distinct meanings as dissemination. The interaction of the painting with Enishte Effendi produces a distinct meaning, making evident the 'mirthful half' to which the colour red had referred.

Failing to notice that the portrait is a scene of displacement, Enishte Effendi assigns it the role of an ideal mirror image with which he needs to identify in order to define his 'self' and it is with that attempt to identify that he initiates the project of a secret book that would contain the portrait of the Sultan. The project of the secret book that Enishte Effendi initiates emerges as a copy of the portrait painting while defining the two as binaries. Because Enishte Effendi defines the portrait as an ideal unified definition of identity, similar to the mirror image, with an essentialist perspective he accords it an originary presence. As a result his attempts at identification symbolized by the secret book not only emerge as derivative copies but also are doomed to fail.

The secret book, in its attempt to create a combination of the two traditions in order to define an originary and unique 'self' that would lead to identification with the ideal Western definition of identity echoes in relation with Tanpınar's desire to define an authentic Turkish 'self'. As can be observed in Tanpınar's oeuvre, the desire to define an authentic, singular, Turkish 'self' is a goal towards which the nation aspires only in order to be unique like the Western

ideal. The example set by the West – the definition of an originary and essential ‘self’ – needs to be imitated in order to define a similar, authentic Turkish ‘self’.

For Tanpınar this ideal is defined by:

a lived synthesis of apparently contradictory identities (Eastern and Western, traditional and modern, Istanbulite and Anatolian, Islamic and secular) manifested by the people of Turkey. (Göknar, 2003: 648)

For Pamuk, on the other hand, the representation of identity inevitably involves its re-invention through difference and deferral thus rather than ensuring a predetermined and authentic definition it creates a space where meaning is disseminated. In line with various postcolonial theories Pamuk too ‘argued for the various notions of hybridity, creolization, and *mestizaje* that refuse the metaphysical underpinnings of ideals of authenticity’ (Sedinger, 2002: 41).

Within this framework Enishte’s book is doomed to fail because it establishes the Western art of portraiture as a symbol for a totalizing and homogenous definition of identity. His attempts to identify with that fantasy through the secret book not only will inevitably fail but also will confine his ‘self’ within the original/copy binary, thus making it always inferior and lacking as opposed to the unified and authentic fantasy of the mirror image. The failure of the secret book is made explicit with Master Osman’s reaction:

How might I explain what I saw as I moved the magnifying lens over them? I felt like laughing – and not because they were humorous. I was incensed – it seemed that Enishte Effendi had instructed my masters as follows: ‘Don’t paint like yourselves, paint as if you were someone else.’ He’d forced them to recall nonexistent memories, to conjure and paint a future, which they’d never want to live. (Pamuk, 2002: 290)

The identification that Enishte Effendi aimed to achieve with the creation of painting in imitation of the Western portrait fails to provide him with a singular

definition of their identities. While trying in vain to fulfil a fantasy, the identities of the miniaturists remain within the boundaries of a metaphysical dichotomy where they emerge as inferior copies. Within the framework of the Turkish experience of modernity, the paintings of the secret book echo the reforms that were introduced by the governing elite in order to create a modern society, in the likeness of its Western counterparts. These reforms because they were formulated based on the fantasy of a Western ideal definition of original identity with ‘nonexistent memories’ resulted in the portrayal of a future that ‘they’d never want to live’.

Clearly the secret book of Enishte Effendi is received with hostility not merely because of the stylistic details that are considered to be heresy within the miniature tradition but also, as the murderer states, because of its threatening position towards the purity of the ‘self’:

this is the Devil’s work, not only because the art of perspective removes the painting from God’s perspective and lowers it to the level of a street dog, but because your reliance on the methods of the Venetians as well as your mingling of our own established traditions with that of infidels will strip us of our *purity* and reduce us to being their slaves. (Pamuk, 2002: 194, *my emphasis*)

The murderer, in accordance with the traditional view of the art of miniature, suggests that there is a pure ‘self’ that needs to be protected from the threats posed by the Venetian methods. Representation of that purity, however, is only possible through repetition, which inevitably contains the possibility of fiction. Their purity thus emerges as always already defined through fragmentation and multiplicity that leads to further dissemination. The murderer’s illusion reflects the metaphysical illusion, which is constructed around the fantasy of an essential, central and pure originary definition of the ‘self’, from which

derivatives transpire, thus leading to a system where each concept is defined in binaries. Pamuk by using the miniature tradition as a metaphor for the ‘self’ demonstrates the always already ‘contaminated’ constitution of the ‘self’, which is created through a process of imitation. This parallel not only challenges the pejorative definition of imitation as such but also by offering an alternative perspective to view the ‘self’ as dynamic and flexible challenges the connection between the pure and the authentic. Enishte’s reply to the murderer expresses Pamuk’s views on purity:

‘Nothing is pure,’ said Enishte Effendi. ‘In the realm of the book arts, whenever a masterpiece is made, whenever a splendid picture makes my eyes water out of joy and causes a chill to run down my spine, I can be certain of the following: Two styles heretofore never brought together have come together to create something new and wondrous...To God belongs the East and the West. May *He protect us from the will of the pure and unadulterated.*’ (Pamuk, 2002: 194, *my emphasis*)

It is important to note that the shifting views of Enishte Effendi emerge as the example of the impossibility of a pure self. Enishte Effendi, who previously praised portrait painting because of its ability to capture a unique definition of the ‘self’, now adopts a distinct perspective suggesting that the pure and authentic is always already fragmented and multiple. The two distinct views of Enishte Effendi display how his ‘self’ is not a pure and originary presence, but that it is defined through its different representations. The two representations of Enishte Effendi, which portray him advocating two distinct views, define his identity by re-inventing him as ‘an-other’. Rather than ensuring a pure and originary definition of his ‘self’, it indicates an always already fragmented constitution that enables dissemination of meaning.

Despite Enishte Effendi’s views regarding the impossibility of a pure state, the murderer tries to remain pure because it is only then that he can differentiate

between his 'real' and 'murderer' identities. Only by assuming a pure and originary definition of his 'self' that he can define his 'murderer' identity as a derivative attribute that is exterior to his pure essence.

'There's always work for the artist who wants to remain pure, there's always a place to find shelter,' I said.
'Aye', said Stork, 'going blind and fleeing to nonexistent countries.'
'Why is it that you want to remain pure?' said Black. 'Stay here with us.'⁶² (Pamuk, 2002: 489)

Stork's reply describes the situation that the murderer is in as in order to remain pure he wishes to escape to the East where he believes their old tradition of miniature painting will prevail. The blindness that Stork refers to not only hints at the actual blinding of the murderer but also denotes the blindness of forms as producers of meaning. The murderer can only continue to believe in a pure definition of his self by ignoring the forms as producers of meanings. It is by remaining blind to forms that he can still contend that an inherent, pure and originary definition of his 'self' is independent of forms.

In his attempt to capture a pure definition of his self, the murderer attempts to paint his self-portrait in the Western style. Despite having the necessary skills his painting fails to reproduce the perfection of the Venetian portraits. Because the murderer is trying to achieve an essentially 'pure' definition of his self, irrespective of the stylistic perfection, the paintings fail to correspond to his utopian expectations. The murderer's attempt to represent his individual identity is doomed to fail as he is trying to capture a fantasy that has never existed.

⁶² It is important to note here that a significant part of Black's words have been lost in translation. I offer the following translation as they appear in the original Turkish edition: 'Stay here with us and *mix*' (Pamuk, 1998; 457, *my emphasis, my translation*). Black's reference to mixing contrasts with the emphasis that the murderer puts on 'purity'.

In the center of this world, where Our Sultan should've been, was my own portrait, which I briefly observed with pride. I was somewhat unsatisfied with it because after laboring in vain for days, looking into a mirror and erasing and reworking, I was unable to achieve a good resemblance; still, I felt unbridled elation because the picture not only situated me at the center of a vast world, but for some unaccountable and diabolic reason, it made me appear more profound, complicated and mysterious than I actually was. (Pamuk, 2002: 484)

Similar to the secret book of Enishte Effendi, the self-portrait of the murderer aims to identify with an ideal fantasy of unity that he sees in the mirror. For him, the mirror image symbolizes a totalizing image and through the self-portrait he strives to reproduce that totality. This fantasy of totality escapes him the more he tries. As Derrida notes, the idea of totality is compromised as soon as it emerges:

There is nothing of the totality that is not immediately opened, pierced, or bored through: the mask of this impossible self-portrait whose signatory sees himself disappearing before his own eyes the more he tries desperately to recapture himself in it. (Derrida, 1993a: 69)

Not only does the murderer consider the mirror image the epitome of a total and absolute selfhood but also he attempts to obtain that ideal in his painting. With the self-portrait the murderer aims to reproduce the fantasy reflected in the mirror as the same. He fails to recognize that repetition is never the reproduction of the same but is always a process of difference and deferral. The murderer's attempt to reproduce the image reflected in the mirror results in the production of a distinct image, 'an-other', which not only challenges the purity of the ideal mirror image that he is trying to identify with but also suggests a definition of representation as dissemination of meaning. His mimetic attempt to recreate that ideal mirror image is only possible through a repetition of the 'self' as 'an-other'. In Derrida's words:

What announces itself here is an internal division within *mimesis*, a self-duplication of repetition itself; *ad infinitum*, since this movement feeds its own proliferation. Perhaps, then, there is always more than one kind of *mimesis*; and perhaps it is in the strange mirror that reflects but also displaces and distorts one *mimesis* into the other, as though it were itself destined to mime or mask *itself*... (Derrida, 2004: 204)

The mimetic attempt of the murderer to reproduce his mirror image results in a displacement of that image which produces a similar yet distinct image on the canvas. Thus *mimesis* is never possible as the eventual closure of meaning but rather is defined by its own displacement as each representation further enhances the possibility of displacement through deferral and difference.

The murderer's attempt to identify with his ideal mirror image is never possible as the total correspondences of the artist and the subject. The representation of the 'self' in the self-portrait will always re-invent the artist as 'an-other', resulting in further dissemination of meaning.

Yet in all the cases of the self-portrait, only a nonvisible referent in the picture, only an extrinsic clue, will allow identification. For the identification will always remain indirect. One will always be able to dissociate the 'signatory' from the 'subject' of the self-portrait... the identification remains *probable*, that is, uncertain, withdrawn from any internal reading, an object of inference and not of perception. (Derrida, 1993a: 64)

The self-portrait rather than enabling identification between the subject and the signatory of the painting displays the always already fragmented constitution of all attempts to represent. For the murderer the self-portrait is a failure because of its inability to repeat the ideal mirror image in order to allow identification. For Pamuk, on the other hand, the self-portrait is the only possible representation of identity as it displays its definition as a perpetual dissemination. It is the 'probable' identification that defines identity by allowing its meaning to be constantly displaced. It makes evident that the definition of the 'self' is not an

inherent originary presence but that it is made possible only through its distinct representations as ‘an-other’.

In this process of endless repetition and re-invention the only stable position is accorded to the mirror. The couplet that Master Osman sees in the mirror he uses to blind himself echoes the indispensable role of the mirror in Pamuk’s oeuvre as the emblem of this process of endless imitation: ‘In the couplet worked into the frame of the mirror, the poet had wished the observer eternal beauty and wisdom – and eternal life to the mirror itself’ (Pamuk, 2002: 394). The mirror as representation will have eternal life. There can never be a final definition of identity but only its multiple representations that constantly re-invent it as ‘an-other’. Both claims at being one ‘self’ and not being one ‘self’ as illustrated by the two distinct traditions of painting are irrelevant as the ‘self’ rather than being a fixed state of absolute singularity is defined through an endless process of repetition and becoming ‘an-other’.

The impossibility of purity is not only relevant for the definition of the identity of the self but also in relation with the definition of the work of art. The birth of a new and original style is not the result of purity but rather is obtained by the bringing together of previous works, styles and techniques. Unlike what the murderer believes, the personal style of an artist does not refer to an essential purity but rather implies the production of meaning as a constant process of imitation that enables difference and deferral.

a new style doesn’t spring from a miniaturist’s own desire. A prince dies, a shah loses a battle, a seemingly never-ending era ends, a workshop is closed and its members disband, searching for other homes and other bibliophiles to become their patrons. One day, a compassionate sultan will assemble these exiles, these bewildered but talented refugee miniaturists and calligraphers, in his own tent or palace and begin to establish his own book-arts workshop. Even if these artists, unaccustomed to one another, continue at first in their respective painting styles, over time, as with children who gradually

become friends by roughhousing on the street, they'll quarrel, bond, struggle and compromise. *The birth of a new style is the result of years of disagreements, jealousies, rivalries and studies in color and painting.* (Pamuk, 2002: 203, my emphasis)

Enishte Effendi voices Pamuk's views on the definition of a singular identity. What makes a new style possible is the bringing together of distinct styles and traditions together. A new style is not the confirmation of a homogenous and pure essence but is always already constituted by a multiplicity of fragments. A new style is not the celebration of homogeneity but rather the possibility of meaning as dissemination.

It is the storyteller in *My Name is Red* who provides an insight into Pamuk's definition of identity, as his identity is constantly re-invented as 'an-other'. The storyteller is the only narrator of *My Name is Red* who is deprived of a name. In the nine chapters where he is the narrator, the storyteller at the coffeehouse gives voice to the nine paintings that compose Enishte Effendi's secret book. That is why the chapters where he is the narrator are entitled after the figures whose stories he tells. Despite speaking in the first person singular, the storyteller never speaks as himself, always appearing as one of the nine figures, which include abstractions like Death as well as inanimate objects like a gold coin. Thus, in each chapter where he tells the story of a figure, the storyteller defines his identity by representing himself as 'an-other'. The names of the characters rather than providing a singular definition of the storyteller's identity, re-invent him as 'an-other' in each chapter.

Black describes the coffeehouse where the storyteller performs as follows:

Inside it was crowded and warm. The storyteller, the likes of whom I had seen in Tabriz and in Persian cities and who was known thereabouts as a 'curtain-caller', was perched on a raised platform beside the wood-burning stove. He had unfolded and hung before the crowd a picture, the figure of a dog drawn on rough paper hastily but

with a certain elegance. He was giving voice to the dog, and pointing, from time to time, at the drawing. (Pamuk, 2002: 12)

The storyteller's performances are considered to be a threat for the more conservative parts of the society as through his characters the storyteller also voices some controversial ideas. For example when speaking as the horse, he questions the legacy of the miniature art by drawing attention to its claim to depict the world, as God would see it.

Because they're attempting to depict the world that God perceives, not the world that they see. Doesn't that amount to challenging God's unity, that is – Allah forbid – isn't it saying that I could do the work of God? (Pamuk, 2002: 264)

Not only the criticisms and the daring attitude of the storyteller but also the representation of his own identity constitute a threat for the more conservative parts of the society who eventually attack and kill him. Rather than adhering to a definition of his identity that is based on the purity of an essential and originary meaning, the storyteller becomes 'what he is' through the various representations that re-invent him as 'an-other'. Even when he dies after a brutal attack, the storyteller's identity is defined through 'an-other':

As I lowered the lamp to his head, we saw what we'd suspected: They'd killed the storyteller. *There was no trace of blood on his face, which made up like a woman's, but his chin, brow and rouge-covered mouth were battered, and judging his neck, covered in bruises, he'd been throttled.* (Pamuk, 2002: 434, *my emphasis*)

Neither his name nor the facial features of the storyteller are revealed. The absence of both features, while establishing a parallel with the figures in a miniature painting, also undermines the validity of the face and the proper name as agents of a singular definition of identity. The red mark on his face caused by the rouge that he was wearing to impersonate the figure of a woman, mimics the

painting of Hüsrev that represented him as a red spot. Both men's identities are portrayed not through realistic depiction of their faces but rather through their representation as 'an-other'.

The strangling indicates the desire to silence the voice that challenges the established order. In addition to the invisibility of his face, the controversial position of the storyteller echoes the modern novelist who faces threats and persecution because of his ideas.⁶³ According to Nilüfer Kuyaş:

Within the Ottoman society the voice of the storyteller is the first independent voice that reaches out to modernity. The tradition of storytelling is the antechamber of the novel. (Kuyaş, 2006: 356, *my translation*)

Both the storyteller of *My Name is Red* and the novelist represent their identities through their representations as 'an-other'. It is neither their names nor their facial features that define their identities but only the stories they tell by giving voice to various other characters. The personal style of the novelist does not emerge from his desire to reach an originary and predetermined definition of his singular identity but rather is created through the perpetual re-invention of his self as 'an-other' in his work, which define him in displacement. The figure of Orhan the storyteller that emerges in the final chapter of *My Name is Red* offers an insight into the definition of Pamuk's identity as a novelist.

Without limiting his scope to the character of Orhan the writer, Pamuk represents his immediate family with the characters of Shekure and her two sons Orhan and Shevket who are named after his mother, bother and himself. The reproduction of his family in the diegetic level of *My Name is Red* does not only

⁶³ An indirect link could be established with the Rushdie Affair. It is also prophetic of Pamuk's own controversy caused by his statements regarding the killings of the Kurdish and Armenian population.

produce a metafictional effect but displays the definition of identity as it has been portrayed throughout the narrative. The reproduction of the proper names, far from resulting in the repetition of the same, results in their representation as ‘an-other’. Neither their names nor their family ties provide a singular and originary definition of Orhan, Shevket or Shekure. Their representation, in *My Name is Red*, is not a portrait painting as the murderer wishes to attain it, but rather is similar to the representation of Hüsrev as a red spot which re-invents them as ‘an-other’ thus leading to a definition of their identities as dissemination of meaning.

Similarly Orhan, who is presented as the writer of the story, rather than providing a repetition of the same, enables the definition of Pamuk’s identity as a process of representation. Shekure explains that she had told her son this story hoping that he would write it down:

In the hopes that he might pen this story, which is beyond depiction, I’ve told it to my son Orhan. Without hesitation I gave him the letters Hasan and Black sent me, along with the rough horse illustrations with the smeared ink, which were found on poor Elegant Effendi. Above all, don’t be taken in by Orhan if he’s drawn Black more absentminded than he is, made our lives harder than they are, Shevket worse and me prettier and harsher than I am. *For the sake of a delightful and convincing story, there isn’t a lie Orhan wouldn’t deign to tell.* (Pamuk, 2002: 503, *my emphasis*)

The possibility of fiction to which Shekure draws attention is not limited to Orhan’s narrative but denotes all representation. Orhan’s portrayal can never be the exact repetition of the same, but will inevitably contain the possibility of fiction. The events that constitute Orhan’s story do not contain an inherent and originary meaning, but are given significance with each representation. As they appear in Orhan’s story these events are re-invented as ‘an-other’ and thus are assigned new meanings within the framework of his story. Consequently the character of Orhan, the writer, is not the repetition of Pamuk as the same but

rather is the definition of his identity through displacement. Since there is no inherent definition of Pamuk's identity, it is the repetition of his name that provides a definition of 'what he is' by allowing dissemination of meaning through difference and deferral.

My Name is Red explores the possible ways of defining identity through the distinct formal conventions of artistic production. Using the self/other binary as a starting point Pamuk displays the impossibility of a singular and originary definition of the self as all attempts to capture meaning contain the possibility of fiction. Through miniature painting and Western portrait, Pamuk addresses the anxiety that is inherent in the Turkish experience of modernity. Unlike Tanpınar who adheres to a definition of authentic 'self' that is represented by the ideal mirror image of the West, Pamuk suggests an always already fragmented constitution of identity regardless of its cultural framework.

My Name is Red problematizes all attempts to obtain a definition of identity as the exact reproduction of an originary meaning. It indicates how all representation inevitably contains the possibility of fiction irrespective of the formal conventions.

Representation as difference and deferral allows definition of identity not by providing identification with a mirror image but rather shows the always already fragmented constitution of the mirror image. The definition of the self is only possible through its representation as 'an-other' as the line that the murderer remembers claims: "I am not me but eternally thee." I've always wondered how one might illustrate this line' (Pamuk, 2002: 120). *My Name is Red* illustrates the line by providing a definition of identity that always 'appears in the reverberation of several voices' (Derrida, 1993: 64).

**IV. The Self-Portrait of the 'T': *Istanbul: Memories of a
City***

*Istanbul: Memories of a City*⁶⁴ portrays the first twenty-two years of its narrator, Orhan, in Istanbul. Following Hoja, the Venetian and the miniaturists who all embarked on journeys searching for representations of their ‘selves’ either through words or images, in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* Orhan undertakes a journey in Istanbul searching for a definition of ‘what he is’ as he becomes ‘another’ Orhan. The autobiographical elements, the narrator Orhan and the first person narration encourage an equation of the narrator with the author of the book. Such an association leads to the conclusion of the possibility of autobiography as the totalizing and unique narrative of the ‘self’. As I will argue, however, *Istanbul: Memories of a City* not only calls into question the possibility of such a totalizing representation but also foregrounds a fragmented and heterogeneous constitution of the ‘self’ that refutes all attempts to provide an ultimate definition. Thus in order to prevent a totalizing reading I will differentiate between Orhan the narrator and Orhan Pamuk the author of the book; Orhan will henceforward refer to the narrator and Pamuk to the author. This division far from enhancing a binary view of the real and the fictional aims to mimic the blurry zone that the narrative creates in order to illustrate the eclipsed nature of all representation. This differentiation will allow me to underline the fragmented definition of the ‘self’ that is always in displacement. Similar to the characters of ‘Orhan the writer’ that appeared in *The White Castle* and *My Name*

⁶⁴ The sub-title of the book differs in the British and American editions. While the American edition conforms to the Turkish original, the British version appears under the title *Istanbul: Memories of a City*. Alev Adil also draws attention to this modification and states that the publishing house’s ‘decision to change the subtitle from "Memories and the City" to "Memories of a City" seems likely to mislead the reader’ (Adil, 2005). However it needs to be noted that this small yet consequential detail was soon rectified as ‘Pamuk made sure the subtitle was changed back to the original version when the book was published in the United States’ (McGaha, 2008: 171). The relevance of the title will be discussed in more detail in the following pages.

is *Red* the Orhan of *Istanbul: Memories of a City* will be read as part of the writing 'I'.

The text, published in 2003 in Turkish and in English in a translation by Maureen Freely in 2005, is composed of thirty-seven chapters, an epigraph, a dedication,⁶⁵ an index and various photographs of both the city and Orhan Pamuk. Although the narrative portrays the first twenty-two years of Orhan's life starting with his birth and ending when he is twenty-two, a coherent chronological evolution is absent. The chapters do not necessarily follow a thematic or chronological order, but appear as individual stories. Despite the variety of subjects addressed in the different chapters the city of Istanbul and Orhan remain as the two central elements throughout the narrative. The city is not depicted as a metaphor for Orhan's emotions but is re-invented so that it becomes a mirror where Orhan can see the multiplicity of images that form his 'self'. The title of the narrative provides an initial hint regarding this process of re-invention.

The Turkish original title of the narrative, 'Istanbul: Memories and the City', unlike the English version, does not establish a possessive relation between the memories and the city. The two are connected with the conjunction 'and' which lacks any implication of possession or priority. The memories and the city together compose the Istanbul that is portrayed in the narrative. The 'Istanbul' in the title refers to the book that is created with Orhan's memories and not necessarily aims to offer a correspondence with the 'real' city of Istanbul. The title thus rather than differentiating between the real and the fictional Istanbul indicates how the only possible definition of Istanbul is obtained through its representation as 'an-other'.

⁶⁵ *Istanbul: Memories of a City* is dedicated to Pamuk's father Gunduz Pamuk who died in 2002.

The English title, on the other hand, establishes a distinct relation through the use of the genitive. ‘Istanbul: Memories of a City’, while highlighting a possessive relation between the city and the memories, also prompts uncertainty as to the ownership of the memories. The phrase ‘memories of a city’ could be read as memories belonging to the city as well as others’ memories of the city. This ambiguity not only hints at a parallel with the ambivalence that is conveyed through different thematic elements in the narrative but also calls into question a definition of memory based on the real/fictional binary. The ambivalence created with the use of the genitive in the English title implies that the Istanbul portrayed in the narrative is created with memories irrespective of their ownership. The reluctance to differentiate between the origin of memories that is displayed in the title, hints at the problematic division between the real and the fictional that the narrative will also address.⁶⁶ Furthermore the use of the indefinite article ‘a’ in the title ‘Memories of a City’ suggests that these memories are not specific to Istanbul. The title, thus, without limiting the narrative to the singular experience of Orhan in Istanbul, suggests a broader framework that addresses the construction and representation of identity.

The epigraph of the narrative is taken from Ahmet Rasim (1864-1932): ‘The beauty of a landscape resides in its melancholy.’⁶⁷ Rasim was a columnist – a ‘*feuilletoniste*’ (Pamuk, 2006: 123) – famous for his articles on the daily life in Istanbul. The main point where Rasim differs from other authors writing on Istanbul is his joyous approach which prevents him from adopting a nostalgic viewpoint. As Orhan explains in the fifteenth chapter of the narrative entitled

⁶⁶ This division will be further discussed in the following section when Orhan talks about the reasons behind his reluctance to use a specific tense in the Turkish language.

⁶⁷ The Turkish original uses the word *hüzün*.

‘Ahmet Rasim and Other City Columnists’ Rasim’s enthusiasm for life puts him among the great writers of Istanbul.

He was able to balance the post-imperial melancholy that engulfed Tanpınar the novelist, Yahya Kemal the poet and Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar the memoirist, with his limitless energy, optimism and high spirits. Like all writers who love Istanbul, he was interested in its history and wrote books about it, too, but because he was careful to keep his melancholy in check, he never yearned for a ‘lost golden age’. Rather than see Istanbul’s past as a sacred treasure chest, rather than dredge history for the authentic voice that might allow him to produce a Western-style masterpiece, he preferred, like most others in the city, to confine himself to the present: Istanbul was an amusing place to live and that was all there was to it. (Pamuk, 2006: 123)

The lack of nostalgia in Rasim’s writings is a helpful clue to understand the reverberations of the epigraph for *Istanbul: Memories of a City*. Very much like Rasim, Pamuk too with *Istanbul: Memories of a City* does not immerse in a nostalgic journey where the memories are depicted in remembrance of a ‘lost golden age’. Similar to Rasim Pamuk dwells in an always already fragmented present, which results in the creation of ‘an-other’ Istanbul. The epigraph thus reflects how for Pamuk too the melancholy of the city is not a source of sadness for the lost past, but a rich possibility to re-invent a beautiful present as *différance*. *Istanbul: Memories of a City* does not establish a binary position where the past is juxtaposed with the present, but instead displays a more fragmented and blurry portrayal where both the past and the present are constantly being re-invented, resulting in a narrative of ‘an-other’ Istanbul.

In this chapter I will study how *Istanbul: Memories of a City* both thematically and structurally calls into question the attempt to define a fixed and unique definition of the ‘self’ for both Orhan and Istanbul. I will initially discuss how the narrative’s structural composition is reflected in Orhan’s construction of his ‘self’. Focusing on the paratextual elements and the variety of textual and

visual materials incorporated I will explore the process of assigning meaning to Orhan's narrative of his 'self'. Using the parallel between Orhan and Istanbul I will discuss how the representation of both identities is symbolized through the recurrent themes established by the black-and-white, ruins and the feeling of *hüzün*.⁶⁸ I will analyse how the East/West, fictional/real, word/image pairs that have conventionally been defined as binaries are called into question through the shadowy space that emerges 'in-between'.

⁶⁸ *Hüzün* is the Turkish word for melancholy but its use in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* in the Turkish original results in a broader connotation, which I will discuss in the following pages.

A. Urban Anecdotes

Istanbul: Memories of a City is a complex narrative that resists being confined within the boundaries of a fixed definition. Alongside personal anecdotes, historical incidents, writings by other artists, newspaper clips, street signs as well as various photographs and illustrations are all part of the narrative, making it difficult to categorize under one label. The difficulty of designating the genre of the narrative also becomes evident in the writings of many critics. Esra Mirze Santesso, for example, defines *Istanbul: Memories of a City* as ‘a kind of pseudo-memoir and *Kunstlerroman*, [that] contains black and white photographs of the city scattered throughout the volume along with other visual components (sketches, engravings, and paintings)...’ (Santesso, 2011: 153). The definition Esra Akcan offers focuses on the two distinct aspects of the narrative: ‘In his recent book *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, Orhan Pamuk juxtaposes his autobiography as a child with the biography of Istanbul in the 1970s’ (Akcan, 2006: 39). For Verena Laschinger ‘...the first-person narrator of Orhan Pamuk's autobiography, *Istanbul: Memories of a City*, explores the city's darkest corners to get a sense of himself’ (Laschinger, 2009: 102). Nazan Aksoy and Bülent Aksoy acknowledge the variety of attributes that one can use to refer to *Istanbul: Memories of a City* and underline the autobiographical features as a primary trait:

The first aspect of the text that draws attention is the fact that it is an autobiography that describes the author's passage from childhood to adulthood. This autobiographical quality gives the text a taste of a novel...it [the book] also presents the history of the city. (Aksoy and Aksoy, 2008: 281, *my translation*)

While the label autobiography covers the recounting of personal memories that plays a presiding role in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* it fails to represent the unusual constitution of the narrative both structurally and contextually. In the first chapter entitled ‘Another Orhan’ a distinct perspective regarding the constitution of the narrative is presented.

From a very young age, I suspected there was more to my world than I could see: somewhere in the streets of Istanbul, in a house resembling ours, there lived *another Orhan* so much like me that he could pass for my twin, even my double... the ghost of the *other Orhan* in another house somewhere in Istanbul never left me... Whenever I was unhappy, I imagined going to the other house, the other life, the place where the *other Orhan* lived, and in spite of everything, I'd half convince myself that I was he and took pleasure in imagining how happy he was, such pleasure that, for a time, I felt no need to go to seek out the other house in that other imagined part of the city. (Pamuk, 2006: 3, *my emphasis*)

This unusual opening not only challenges the conventional autobiographical structure, but also by introducing ‘an-other’ Orhan grants visibility to what has been implied in the previous books. What was hinted at in *The White Castle* and *My Name is Red* takes a more concrete form in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* with the presence of another Orhan. The reference to another Orhan, while highlighting the various representations of Orhan that will appear in the narrative, suggests that the only possible definition of Orhan’s identity is provided by its representations as ‘an-other’.

The significance of another Orhan is not limited to the opening section of the narrative but appears as a general theme throughout the narrative. It gains visibility and multiplicity when Orhan tells about one of his favourite childhood games. The significant role of the mirror in that game establishes the connection with ‘an-other’ Orhan and the definition of identity.

When boredom loomed, I would cheer myself up *with a game very similar to the one I would later play in my novels*. I would push the bottles and brushes towards the centre of the dressing table, along with the locked silver box with the floral decorations that I had never once seen my mother open, and, bringing my own head forward so that I could see it in the central panel of the mirror triptych, I would push the two wings of the mirror inwards and outwards until the two side mirrors were reflecting each other and *I could see thousands of Orhans shimmering in the deep, cold, glass-coloured infinity...* Caught between the three mirrors, the tens and hundreds of reflected Orhans changes every time I altered the panels' positions even slightly... (Pamuk, 2006: 69, *my emphasis*)

Evocative of the Lacanian mirror stage, the game that Orhan plays undermines the definition of identity as a process of identification with an ideal and unique mirror image. The major difference between Pamuk's mirror scene and the Lacanian mirror stage is the reflections in the mirror, which evidently affects the definition of identification; unlike in the Lacanian mirror stage where the child is faced with a unique, ideal and unified mirror image, Orhan sees a multiplicity of reflections, various 'other Orhans'. The multiplicity of mirror images have an impact on the identification process; for the Lacanian subject the unique mirror image emerges as an ideal that the subject needs to identify with in order to obtain a definition of his 'self', in Pamuk's case the multiplicity of mirror images not only prevent the prioritization of one image as the absolute ideal but also obliterate the definition of identification as an eventual closure. The impossibility of identifying with the ideal mirror image in Lacan results in the definition of a 'self' that is contrasted with the unified primacy symbolized by the 'other' mirror image. As the game Orhan plays illustrates, however, for Pamuk identification is a process of displacement that never reaches closure. Orhan's identification with the various mirror images is not aimed to reach a final definition through complete correspondence but allows Orhan to be 'what he is' through a constant play of difference. Consequently the definition of Orhan's

identity is not one that is marked by the division of a prior unity but is always already fragmented and multiple. The fragmented definition of the 'self' is also reflected in the constitution of *Istanbul: Memories of a City*, which is composed of various anecdotal chapters.

The New Oxford American Dictionary offers three definitions for the word anecdote: 'a short and amusing or interesting story about a real incident or person', 'an account regarded as unreliable or hearsay', 'the depiction of a minor narrative incident in a painting'. All three definitions of the word echo both structurally and contextually within the narrative.

Istanbul: Memories of a City is composed of thirty-seven chapters, which appear as independent stories rather than emerging as parts of a linear chronologically developing autobiography. In conformity with the first definition of the word anecdote, each chapter describes a different anecdote without necessarily establishing a thematic or chronological link with the previous or subsequent chapters. Without limiting those anecdotes to the memories of Orhan, in a rather Tristram Shandy-esque manner, each chapter tells a distinct anecdote about a variety of subjects that include historical incidents, newspaper clips or another artist's views on Istanbul. For example the twelfth chapter of the narrative entitled 'My Grandmother' contains Orhan's personal memories of his grandmother. The preceding eleventh chapter 'Four Lonely Melancholic Writers', on the other hand, is a much more factual section where Orhan introduces four writers that have influenced him. The sixteenth chapter entitled 'Don't Walk Down the Street with Your Mouth Open' is a pastiche of different 'advice, warnings, pearls of wisdom and invective' that are collected from the

‘hundreds of thousands of pages written by columnists of various persuasions over the past 130 years’ (Pamuk, 2006: 127).

In addition to the variety of subject matters, the lack of a thematic continuity among the chapters underlines the anecdotal constitution of the narrative while drawing attention to the lack of a chronological progression. While the first and the last chapters give a sense of chronological development as the former depicts the birth of Orhan and the latter portrays Orhan when he is twenty-two years old, the ordering of the chapters throughout the narrative disrupts a linear progression. For example, the thirty-first chapter entitled ‘Flaubert in Istanbul: East, West and Syphilis’ is an instructive piece on Flaubert’s visit to Istanbul and does not contain any episodes from Orhan’s memories. The following chapter ‘Fights with My Older Brother’, however, is a very personal piece where Orhan explains how the competitive relation he had with his brother affected him. This chapter mainly portrays Orhan ‘between the ages of six and ten’ (Pamuk, 2006: 265). The following chapter entitled ‘A Foreigner in a Foreign School’ fast forwards temporally and depicts Orhan during his late teenage years when he is attending Robert Academy.

The apparent lack of thematic and chronological continuity between the chapters is also substantiated with the internal structure of the chapters, confirming an anecdotal composition. Each chapter of *Istanbul: Memories of a City* can be compared to a miniature essay that can be read and enjoyed individually. Far from appearing as contingent parts of a linear continuity, the chapters emerge as self-contained entities that can be read independently. The content of the chapters thus reflects the overall structure of the narrative by drawing attention to the fragments that define the ‘self’. The independent chapters

of *Istanbul: Memories of a City* echo the definition of identity as always already fragmented. The narrative is not aiming to create an all-encompassing, totalizing definition of Orhan's or Istanbul's identity but rather with its individual chapters offers a fragmented vision. In the same way that the multiple mirror images represent Orhan by re-inventing him as 'an-other', the individual chapters offer a definition of the narrative's identity as a play of difference. Thus without prioritizing one over the other, each chapter represents the narrative as 'an-other'.

The fragmented constitution of the narrative that is enhanced with the self-contained chapters is further accentuated by the decision, unusual in the context of a work of fiction or autobiography, to include an index, or more precisely two indices, at the end of the book. The multiple and fragmented definition of Orhan that was implied with the first chapter of the narrative is substantiated with the index that allows the reader to create his/her own reading trajectory. The indices follow a brief section entitled 'About the Photographs' where Pamuk explains the sources for the various images reproduced in the narrative. One of the indices is reserved for Istanbul only and includes all the places and monuments that are mentioned in the narrative. The other index is called the 'general index' and includes entries that list all the places, institutions, events, concepts and people that are mentioned in the narrative including 'Orhan Pamuk'⁶⁹ and the other members of the Pamuk family.

This inventory not only facilitates the reader's access to specific themes but also invites an alternative reading sequence. As an alternative to the printed, linear structure of the narrative, the index allows the reader to create his/her own

⁶⁹ It needs to be noted that not only the entries differ in the English and the Turkish versions of the narrative but also in the English translation we find subdivisions under the names of Pamuk family members offering a more detailed index. This subdivision is only used for Orhan Pamuk's name in the Turkish original.

story line following the entries in the index. The reader who wishes to read about a specific part of the city or a prevalent theme in the narrative or about a specific anecdote from Orhan's childhood, is thus encouraged to look it up in the index and go to the page number that is indicated. With the index the reader is free to create his/her own narrative using the same fragments that make *Istanbul: Memories of a City*. The index, therefore, not only underlines the fragmented, non-linear constitution of the narrative but also prevents the establishment of a fixed and predetermined centre for it. Without prioritizing one topic over another, the index enables the reader to re-arrange the parts of the narrative so as to obtain 'an-other' story. Consequently, the narrative emerges as *one of the many* versions that could be created by the re-inventions of 'an-other' Orhans and Istanbul.

The second definition of the word anecdote – an account regarded as unreliable or hearsay – reverberates in relation with one of the most important constituents of the narrative: memories.⁷⁰ The narrator calls into question the status of the memories that will be used to tell that story. Just as the focus on another Orhan worked against the determination of a fixed identity for the narrator, so the focus on the uncertain aspects of the memories invoked in the course of the text makes any opposition between memory and fiction unsustainable:

⁷⁰ I am not suggesting here a definition of memory that aims to 'restore a past (once) present' (Derrida, 1993a; 68) but rather arguing for a memory that is defined through the possibility of repetition. Derrida calls into question the metaphysical definition of memory that differentiates between *mneme* and *hypomnesis*. The metaphysical perspective equates memory with an originary presence and considers all attempts to represent it – through forms of writing – as 'supplementary'. For Derrida, however, the originary present moment far from being pure and uniform is always and already composed of past, present and future moments. What is experienced as the present moment is the memory of it. As a result memory cannot be defined as the originary intact totality but as the always already divided presence that will be re-presented through a perpetual deferral and differing. In other words memory is not the attempt to bring back the lost present but rather a continual movement of *différance*.

In Turkish we have a special tense that allows us to distinguish hearsay from what we've seen with our own eyes; when we are relating dreams, fairy tales, or past events we could not have witnessed, we use this tense...Once imprinted in our minds, other people's reports of what we've done end up mattering more than what we ourselves remember. And just as we learn about our lives from others, so, too, do we let others shape our understanding of the city in which we live... Beautiful though it is, I find the language of epic unconvincing, for I cannot accept that the myths we tell about our first lives prepare us for the brighter, more authentic second lives that are meant to begin when we awake. Because – for people like me, at least – that second life is none other than the book in your hand. So pay close attention, dear reader. Let me be straight with you, and in return let me ask for your compassion. (Pamuk, 2006: 8)

Significantly, Pamuk does not use the tense⁷¹ he mentions in *Istanbul: Memories of a City*. The specific tense consolidates a distinction between the real memories generated by personal experience and the fictional ones generated via hearsay. It also differentiates between the memories belonging to the 'self' and those belonging to 'others'. According to the narrator, not only our impressions of the city but also our perception of our 'selves' is shaped by what others relate to us. For the narrator, the presence of the 'other' is not an external opposition to the 'self' but rather is already part of the 'self' as he had made explicit in reference to the presence of another Orhan. Rather than telling the story of Orhan by differentiating between the 'self' and the 'other' and separating the real memories from the fictional ones with the use of the specific tense, the narrator blurs these binaries. A definition of the 'self' in juxtaposition with the 'other' would imply that there is an inherent and originary definition of the 'self' that makes it distinct from the 'other'. For Pamuk, however, the only possible definition of the 'self' is obtained through its different representations that re-invent it as 'an-other'.

⁷¹ The name of the tense in Turkish is '-miş'li geçmiş zaman'. Orhan gives the following example to show how the narrative would have appeared if he had used that sense: 'Once upon a time I used to paint. I hear I was born in Istanbul, and I understand that I was a somewhat curious child...' (Pamuk, 2006; 8). For those memories that he had acquired from other people's stories, Orhan would have needed to use that sense if he wanted to differentiate between the two kinds of memories as 'fictional' and 'real'.

The distinction between the real and fictional memories echoes the life stories that the Venetian and Hoja had created in *The White Castle* by bringing together multiple fragments including dreams, falsehoods and personal anecdotes. These fragments that compose the life stories do not possess an originary meaning but acquire distinct significances each time they are represented as ‘an-other’. Similarly by refraining from the use of the specific tense, the narrator implies that the memories do not contain an essential meaning that would enable a binary definition between the real and the fictional. Irrespective of their metaphysical categories, the memories are represented in the story that he composes and are thus re-invented as ‘an-other’. The narrator’s position thus precludes a pure and authentic definition of memories, implying rather the impossibility of drawing an unequivocal line that separates the fictional from the real. As is the case for the definition of Orhan’s ‘self’, memories too are composed of multiple fragments that are re-invented with each repetition as ‘an-other’.

The specific tense in Turkish not only differentiates between real and fictional memories but also assumes that it is possible to represent their originary meaning. It suggests that the real memories could be reproduced as the same without any interference of the fictional. Pamuk, however, problematized the definition of representation as the repetition of the same. Following Derrida, he underlines the possibility of fiction in all attempts to represent as difference and deferral. Derrida argues that the representation of the ‘singular event’ is never the repetition of the same but is always its re-invention. Consequently the recollection of the event is also its representation as ‘an-other’:

But from the moment that a testimony must be able to be repeated, *techne* is admitted; it is introduced where it is excluded. For this, one need not wait for camera, videos, typewriters, and computers. As soon as the sentence is repeatable, that is, from its origin, the instant it is

pronounced and becomes intelligible, thus idealizable, it is already instrumentalizable and affected by technology... And it is perhaps here, with the technological both as ideality and prosthetic iterability, that the possibility of fiction *and lie*, simulacrum *and* literature, that of the right to literature insinuates itself, at the very origin of truthful testimony, autobiography in good faith, sincere confession, as their essential compossibility. (Derrida, 2002: 42)

As such the narrator's reluctance to differentiate between fictional and real memories not only underlines the inherent possibility of *literature* in all acts of remembering as representation but also problematizes the designation of the genre of *Istanbul: Memories of a City* as a truthful autobiography. The process of remembering for the narrator does not entail an exact reproduction of the memories but rather becomes possible only with the possibility of fiction as he also acknowledges: 'But these are the words of a fifty-year-old writer who is trying to shape the chaotic thoughts of a long-ago adolescent into *an amusing story*' (Pamuk, 2006: 290, *my emphasis*). The memories cannot be categorized as real or fictional since they do not possess an inherent quality that would enable such a definition; they acquire distinct definitions as they become part of Orhan's story.

The third definition of the word anecdote – the depiction of a minor narrative incident in a painting – with its visual dimension, resonates in relation to the extensive use of images⁷² throughout the narrative. The black-and-white photographs of the city,⁷³ of Orhan and of the various members of his family, as well as the various reproductions from Melling's engravings and R. E. Koçu's *The Istanbul Encyclopedia* fill the pages of the narrative. The content of these visual elements and their placement within the text, not only problematize the

⁷² Taking into account the fact that the greater number of images that appear in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* are photographs, I wish to focus specifically on the implications of the use of photography within the text. The terms 'image' and 'photography' may be used interchangeably.

⁷³ A large number of the photographs of the city are by Ara Güler, the famous Turkish photojournalist, known as 'the eye of Istanbul'.

genre of the narrative but also offer a definition of the 'self' as 'an-other', as outlined in the narrative. Starting with the study of the juxtaposition of the images with the written word I will then discuss the implications of their anecdotal content.

Image and word have long been used together in different forms of representation. From commercial advertisement to cookbooks the juxtaposition of the two has become ubiquitous. As J. H. Miller notes, the coexistence of the word and the image is facilitated by the fact that they are both visual signs. Nevertheless they are intrinsically different from one another.

After all, both text and image are something seen with the eyes and made sense of as a sign. What, in fact, is the difference between reading a word and making sense of a picture? This is just the question. (Miller, 1992: 73)

Although image and text have been used together in different forms of representation, the purpose of this collaboration is subject to debate. The main argument appears to focus on clarity; is the word used to explain what the image cannot transmit or vice versa? According to Mark Twain a picture is always lacking without the word:

Mark Twain did not think a picture superior to text... A picture presents something, but what that something is cannot be known for sure unless the picture is labelled, placed back within the context of some diachronic narrative. The interpretation of a picture is, for Twain, necessarily verbal. (Miller, 1996: 61)

Another instance that Miller discusses where the image and word appear together is the images that have captions underneath. Drawing attention to the different effects that they have on temporality Miller states that the visual disrupts the text's temporal dimension:

The effect of such a picture with explanatory caption is strange. It shows that even verbal narratives are made of synchronic segments that are obscure when their casual links to before and after are broken. The power of a picture is to detach a moment from its temporal sequence and make it hang there in a perpetual non-present representational present, without past or future. The power of presentation in an illustration is so strong that it suspends all memory and anticipation inscribed in words... (Miller, 1996: 65)

The distinction between the two is based on the metaphysical binary of presence/absence; image testifies to presence by showing what *is*, whereas the word *evokes* what is absent. This is also in line with Roland Barthes' view on photography. According to Barthes too photography's archiving attribute lies in that it captures what has existed. This archiving quality of photography, however, is not a Proustian endeavour, in the sense that it does not involve a nostalgic sentiment to restore the past but operates on evidential grounds as it 'attests that what I see has indeed existed' (Barthes, 2000: 82). Based on its recording capacity, Barthes claims that photography provides a certainty that no writing can give.

The Photograph does not necessarily say *what is no longer*, but only and for certain *what has been*. This distinction is decisive...the Photograph's essence is to ratify what it represents... No writing can give me this certainty. It is the misfortune (but also perhaps the voluptuous pleasure) of language not to be able to authenticate itself... Every photograph is a certificate of presence. (Barthes, 2000: 85)

Barthes' view, while assuming the indivisibility of presence, asserts that the photograph only passively documents that absolute presence. Focusing on this distinction based on the immediacy of the image, Svetlana Alpers proposes that the text is 'by nature the presence of an absence. In the presence of the thing itself words are not needed. A painting is there, here and now' (Miller, 1996: 66). Thus both Alpers and Barthes adhere to a metaphysical definition of presence that is

juxtaposed with absence. Their definitions of photography echoes this binary view as it accords a superior role to photography due to its affiliation with presence.

While these different views explore the link between word and image mainly focusing on the content of both forms of representation, in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* the arrangement of the images play as important a role as their content. The images in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* are not separated from the text but appear within the text alongside the written word. Rather than being grouped together in an appendix in the middle or at the end of the book, as is usually the case in autobiographical narratives, they appear scattered throughout the narrative. There are no direct references within the narrative that acknowledges the presence of images⁷⁴ or any captions underneath the images explaining their content. Only in the section entitled ‘About the Photographs’ that appears at the end of the narrative, before the index, an explanation regarding the selection process of the images as well as a list that acknowledges their original sources is provided. The frequency of the images also varies; some chapters, like the thirty-fifth chapter entitled ‘First Love’ contain only one image and others like the sixth chapter entitled ‘Exploring the Bosphorus’ contain eighteen images. This arbitrary effect is further foregrounded with images that appear in the middle of a paragraph, a sentence or even a word. In various instances a word is cut in the middle by an image, disrupting a linear reading experience. Thus rather than operating as supplements to the text, supporting it with visual evidence, the images have a disruptive effect. Their arrangement within the text prevents a

⁷⁴ The only exception occurs when the narrator explains a specific photograph by Ara Güler and why it is important for him: ‘A photograph by Ara Güler perfectly captures the lonely back streets of my childhood, where concrete apartment blocks stand beside old wooden houses, and the streetlamps illuminate nothing, and the chiaroscuro of twilight – the thing that for me defines the city – has descended... What draws me to this photograph... is the suggestion that with evening having just fallen, these two people who are dragging long shadows behind them on their way home are actually pulling the blanket of night over the entire city’ (Pamuk, 2006, 32).

linear and unifying reading experience, instead causing disruptions and divergences. The images contribute to the fragmented and non-linear construction of the narrative. Echoing the game that Orhan used to play by looking at his multiple reflections in the mirror, the photographs show different Orhans and different Istanbuls, as the numerous reflections that are reflected in the mirror.

Echoing Orhan's assertion that the 'views of others' matter more in shaping our perception of our 'selves' and our city, the photographs visually symbolize the 'other's' point of view. As Pamuk acknowledges in the section 'About the Photographs', apart from a few photographs 'of Beşiktaş and Cihangir between pages 242 and 245' (Pamuk, 2006: 336), which were taken by him, the images included in *Istanbul: Memories of a City*, belong to other artists. It is important to note that the other's perspective, to which the narrator refers, is not juxtaposed with an originary 'self' but rather is used in reference to the different representations of both Orhan and the city. As the photographs demonstrate, the 'views of others' are the only possible definitions of Orhan and Istanbul in the sense that they offer representations that re-invent them both as 'an-other'. The views of others matter in the construction of the 'self', because it is the different representations offered by those others that make the 'self' 'what he is'.

Evocative of the distinction that the specific tense would introduce by distinguishing between real memories and hearsay ones, Pamuk places the photographs alongside the text. The photographs that represent the views of others thus appear alongside Orhan's own text, obliterating a separation of the two. Their coexistence within the narrative mimics the absence of the specific tense by underlining the impossibility of recollection as the exact repetition of the same, while also undermining an inherent and originary meaning of the event as such.

The placement of the images next to the text show how the process of ‘recollection thus blurs the distinction between what belongs to the self and what belongs to others’ (Elkins, 2002: 50).

The disruptive effect that the photographs have on the flow of the text reproduces the effect that forgetting has on the process of remembering. Similar to Orhan and memories, which were both defined as fragmented and multiple, the remembering process too emerges as composed of fragments, due to the disruptive effect of the images. These disruptions in the text display how the process of remembering is not an all-encompassing intact entirety but rather is composed of gaps of forgetting. As Katherine Elkins notes, forgetting is an indispensable part of the act of remembering as it highlights its fragmented constitution:

All memories, many scientists now suspect, fall into the category of isolated, partial, reminiscences. These memories allow us to remember past selves only in a fragmentary and discontinuous way. According to this new model, the self is experienced as connected to a past only through chance, momentary recollections that are always fragmentary. Interspersed with these fragmentary recollections are forgotten segments of our past that we leave behind as we move forward in time. Surrounding momentary recollections, then, are the shadowy stretches of oblivion. We are defined as much by what we forget as what we remember. (Elkins, 2002: 48)

The disruptive effect of the images in addition to establishing a parallel between the recollection process and the constitution of the narrative, also underlines the possibility of fiction that is inherent in all remembering.

The positioning of the images within the narrative plays an important role to better understand the effects of the use of images. Nonetheless it is also necessary to analyse their contents as well as their relation to the written text. Looking at the link between text and images, Esra Mirze Santesso suggests that ‘the placement of the pictures appears to have little connection with the narrative’

(Santesso, 2011: 153). Based on the premise that Pamuk had chosen the images ‘*after* the completion of the book’ and that ‘the images do not directly correspond with the autobiographical material of the book’ (Santesso, 2011: 154) she claims that the purpose of the images is not to serve as visual evidence but rather to reflect the aesthetic effect of the text.

the photographs are not used as documentation or confirmation of the accuracy of Pamuk’s memory; rather, reading the text along with the photographs creates a sensation in which the photographs reify and solidify the *mood* instead of the fact of the text. (Santesso, 2011: 157)

This idea that the images confirm the *mood* of the narrative suggests that, contrary to Walter Benjamin’s proposition, the photographs contribute to the creation of the *aura* of the book. In ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’ Benjamin claimed that the main shift that mechanical reproduction brought to the perception of art derives from the loss of *aura*. For Benjamin the unique value of the ‘authentic’ work of art derives from its singular *aura*, which not only depends on the physical conditions of exhibition of the work of art but also connects it to the tradition in which it was produced. Any reproduction would result in the destruction of the *aura* by depriving the work of art of ‘its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be’ (Benjamin, 1999: 214).

According to Santesso, however, reproduction alone is not a sufficient reason to refute the impact of photography; as the case of *Istanbul: Memories of a City* demonstrates, the images, despite being mass-produced, successfully communicate the *mood* of the text:

the photographs are a history, not of the places of the city, but of the emotions created by the book itself. In this regard, *Istanbul* takes a specific stance in refuting photography’s lack of *aura*. The book clearly supports the view – expressed earlier by Barthes and

Szarkowski – that the aesthetic effect of photography cannot be dismissed simply because it can be mass produced. (Santesso, 2011: 158)

For Benjamin, it is the opposition between original and imitation, which makes all reproductions lacking. Modern forms of art that include cinema and photography challenge this hierarchy by depriving the original work of art of its unique *aura*. Equating authenticity with presence, Benjamin claims that no matter how perfect it might be, all reproduction would deprive the work of art of its value:

The situations into which the product of mechanical reproduction can be brought may not touch the actual work of art, yet the quality of its presence is always depreciated... The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too is jeopardized by the reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. (Benjamin, 1999: 215)

While for Benjamin photography causes the loss of the original presence by depriving the work of art of its unique *aura* through mechanical reproduction, according to Roland Barthes photography's power lies in its capacity to reproduce what could never be repeated: 'What the Photograph reproduces to infinity has occurred only *once*: the Photograph mechanically repeats what could never be repeated existentially' (Barthes, 2000: 4, *my emphasis*). For Barthes what gives photography precedence over writing is its capacity to record the present moment.

Derrida offers a different point of view by drawing attention to the impossibility of having a pure archive that captures the present in its entirety. Problematizing the 'oneness' of the event Derrida proposes a distinct definition that highlights the divided instant that is open to modification:

This *Einmaligkeit* – this ‘oneness’ – supposes the undecomposable simplicity, beyond all analysis, of a time of the instant: the moment as the *Augenblick*, the eyeblink of a *prise de vue*, of a shot or of taking (in) a view. But if the “one single time,” if the single, first and last time of the shot already occupies a heterogeneous time, this supposes a differing/deferring and differentiated duration: in a split second the light can change, and we’re dealing with a divisibility of the first time...(Derrida, 2010: 8)

The divisibility of the ‘oneness’ of the instant is also evident in the archiving process. Derrida affirms that in order for that instant to be recorded by photography, it needs to be divisible:

If the archive is constituted by the present itself, it is therefore necessary that the present, in its structure, be divisible even while remaining unique, irreplaceable and self-identical. The structure of the present must be divided so that, even as the present is lost, the archive remains and refers to it as to a non-reproducible referent, an irreplaceable place. (Derrida, 2010: 3)

Similar to the operation of signature that needs to be iterable in order to function, photography too offers a reconsideration of the present moment that is always already defined by a process of differing and deferring. By documenting the instant, photography also makes evident its constitution as *différance*. As a result the certainty of photography, which for Barthes was lacking in writing, becomes problematic. Taking into account the divisibility of the instant, the passive documentation of photography proves controversial. The photograph while recording also divides the instant in fragments, which introduce the possibility of modification, thus threatening the certainty that Barthes praised. Derrida underlines the impossibility of a pure, objective documentation by drawing attention to the technical specifics of photography:

Is it necessary to recall that in photography there are all sorts of initiatives: not only framing but point of view, calculation of light, adjustment of the exposure, overexposure, underexposure, etc.? ... In any case, to the extent that they *produce* the image and constituted something *of an image* [*de l'image*], they modify reference itself,

introducing multiplicity, divisibility, substitutivity, replaceability.
(Derrida, 2010: 7)

Thus Derrida problematizes the definition of photography as the objective documentation of the indivisible instant; he argues instead that photography makes evident the divided constitution of the present as well as the undeniable interference of modification. The images by indicating the repeatability of the present highlight the possibility of fiction that is inherent in all representation.

Rather than attesting to the ‘oneness’ of the event as Barthes proposes, the photographs in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* make explicit the always already divided and fragmented constitution of presence as Derrida puts forward. Challenging the metaphysical equation of presence with the ‘self’, the photographs convey fragmented and multiple portrayals of both Orhan and Istanbul. These photographs far from capturing an original definition of their ‘self’ represent them as ‘an-other’. Rather than providing an ideal ultimate definition, the photographs define Orhan and Istanbul as dissemination of meaning.

The difficulty of establishing a direct parallel between the images and the text that Santesso indicates reflects what Pamuk is doing with his writing: changing by recording. Both the text and the images are representations that produce meaning by recording their contents as ‘an-other’. Focusing on the sixth chapter entitled ‘Exploring the Bosphorus’ Santesso states that the depiction of *yalis*⁷⁵ and their photographs do not correspond.

⁷⁵ *Yalı* is the name given specifically to wooden waterside mansions built on the shores of the Bosphorous. Pamuk in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* describes them as ‘the splendid waterside mansions built by the great Ottoman families during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – came to be seen, in the twentieth, with the advent of the Republic and Turkish nationalism, as models of an obsolete identity and architecture.’ (Pamuk, 2006: 43)

These images depict massive mansions situated on the water, with broken windows, run-down walls, and frail foundations – though no single photograph depicts precisely the type of *yali* he describes (some do not have narrow high windows; others do not have narrow chimneys, etc.)... many of which no longer existed by the time he was taking his Bosphorus expeditions, and which, furthermore, were not located in Tarabya but in other districts... (Santesso, 2011: 157)

Santesso focuses on the differences between what Orhan depicts as belonging to his memories and what the photographs show to assert that the images do not operate as visual proofs of the specific details but instead reflect the general mood of the narrative. Santesso's approach implies that the lack of correspondence between the text and the images is indicative of a failure at capturing the essential and originary meaning of the *yalis*.

I, on the other hand, argue that the lack of correspondence between the text and the images provides the only possible definition. Since there is no originary and essential meaning of the *yalis* that needs to be unravelled, both forms of representation re-invent them as 'an-other' thus providing the definition of *yalis* as a perpetual displacement. The difference in the representations of the *yalis* displays the impossibility of a singular and predetermined meaning. Each representation, whether it is the text or the image, re-invent them thus enabling dissemination of meaning.

The lack of a direct correspondence between the *yalis* that Pamuk describes and the *yalis* that Ara Güler's⁷⁶ photographs show illustrate that the only possible definition of the *yalis* can be obtained through their representations. The *yalis* do not possess an inherent originary meaning but rather acquire distinct significances as they are represented in Pamuk's text and Güler's photographs. In other words, it is the difference between the two representations that makes the

⁷⁶ Not all the images in that chapter belong to Güler; I refer to his images mainly to follow Santesso's argument. It needs to be noted, however, that my argument is valid for all the images reproduced in the narrative.

yalis 'what they are' by defining them through a perpetual movement of difference and deferral.

The specific example of the *yalis* is not only relevant for the link between the text and the visual elements but also evidences Pamuk's position regarding the production of meaning. With *Istanbul: Memories of a City* Pamuk shows how all representation by recording its subject places it within a different context where it will be exposed to different interpretations. Undermining the assumption of an inherent and originary meaning, Pamuk shows how it is only through forms of representation that meaning can be produced as perpetual displacement.

The insignificant details of Orhan's childhood memories, the peripheral neighbourhoods of Istanbul, a street sign that does not have a historical, social or personal value turn into signifiers as they are placed within *Istanbul: Memories of a City*. These elements of the narrative do not contain inherent original meanings, neither are they symbols of a singular experience, but rather acquire different meanings, as they become part of the narrative, as with each representation they become 'an-other'. Similarly the definition of Orhan's and Istanbul's identities do not contain an originary authentic meaning but rather are assigned distinct meanings as they are represented within the narrative.

Evidently the implications of Pamuk's perspective are not restricted within aesthetic concerns but also have political implications. It is by problematizing an essential and originary definition of meaning that Pamuk calls into question the grand narratives that aim to create all-encompassing discourses. The definition of history as a linear progression of unique events as well as the discourses of the nation-state are examples of such narratives that aim to obtain a controllable and predetermined definition of meaning, by eliminating unpredictability caused by

representation. Pamuk, as exemplified with miniature paintings, is not interested in the overall plot but rather in the smaller details that have been ignored by the grand narratives. In other words for Pamuk, neither the 'self' nor history are homogenous self-contained unities as sources of an originary and pure meaning but rather are represented with the multiple fragments that produce meaning as perpetual displacement.

In *Istanbul: Memories of a City* Pamuk portrays the story of the 'self' as the constant movement of displacement that is created by the representation of the various fragments. By choosing these fragments from insignificant details, Pamuk shows how meaning is not an originary and essential attribute reserved for the unique event, but that anything and everything can be assigned meaning through representation.

The use of the peripheral and the insignificant is not limited to a metaphorical connotation but also corresponds to a physical dimension as Orhan explores the back streets of the city. The insignificant constituents are represented with the exploration of the peripheral districts of Istanbul. During the days when he skips high school, Orhan discovers the pleasure that the backstreets of the city offer:

Because I paid for my guilt with every step I took in the city streets, I was better able to appreciate the experience, and could see things only a truly aimless, idle, idiot would notice: the broad, cornered hat that woman over there was wearing, the burnt face of a beggar I'd missed despite passing him every day, the barbers and their apprentices reading the papers in their shops, the girl in the marmalade advertisement on the wall of the apartment building across the street, the workings of the clock in Taksim Square, which was shaped like a piggy bank and I would have missed entirely if not passing by just as they were repairing it – the empty hamburger shops, the locksmiths in the backstreets of Cihangir, the junk dealers, the furniture repairer... (Pamuk, 2006: 275)

The list that Orhan offers does not register the historical sites or the scenic views of the city that could be found in the tourist guides. Instead it offers a list of insignificant details that usually go unnoticed.⁷⁷ These details do not contain an originary meaning but it is with Orhan's noticing and recording that they are assigned new meanings. In a similar fashion the photographs of the city, reproduced in the narrative do not offer landscape views of Istanbul but rather depict the back streets without any recognizable elements characteristic of the city. The majority of the images that show Istanbul are not panoramic images that show the recognizable skyline but rather are close-ups of the various back streets. These images may appear as irrelevant to the text because they do not show the exact list of the things that Orhan refers to, yet they emphasize the effect of the list above by showing the insignificant, peripheral parts of the city. Similar to a miniature painting where the viewer is not interested in the plot but rather focuses on the specific depiction of a flower or a cloud, Pamuk's *Istanbul: Memories of a City* becomes 'what it is' with its portrayal of the peripheral.

Unlike Santesso, I propose that the images *do* correspond to what Pamuk says about writing; by depicting the insignificant and peripheral aspects of the city the photographs show how meaning is assigned to even the most trivial details by recording and reproducing it in a different context. It is the representation of the events that assign them with distinct meanings, as each representation is a process of re-invention through difference and deferral. By reproducing these trivial details in his narrative, Pamuk re-invents them as 'an-other' thus creating a space

⁷⁷ Pamuk's latest novel *The Museum of Innocence* (2008) takes this endeavor further as it is constructed around the everyday objects that its protagonist collects over the years. These objects are now exhibited at the actual Museum of Innocence that opened in April 2012. Hair clips, a quince grinder, the china dog and 4,213 cigarette stubs are among the objects exhibited. The novel and the museum portray how meaning is not an ideal, inherent entity waiting to be discovered but rather is assigned through different encounters.

where meaning will be produced as dissemination. It is through the recording of the ordinary aspects of the city and his life that Pamuk creates the story of ‘an-other’ Orhan.

Once I had mastered this new poetic outlook, I chased with unchecked ardour after *anything and everything* connected with the city. Everything I touched in this state of mind, every piece of knowledge, every artefact, seemed like a work of art. Before my elation subsides let me describe one such ordinary thing, that ferry with the trembling windows. (Pamuk, 2006: 319, *my emphasis*)

Like the ferry he goes on to describe, many other elements of his memories take on distinct meanings, as they become part of the narrative. In this process of recording, along with the city or the insignificant objects, Orhan too is re-invented ‘an-other’.

Irrespective of the correspondence of their content, the photographs are closely related to the text in the sense that they both reflect the opaqueness of the relation between the real and its representations. Susan Sontag’s observations regarding photography denote this relation, drawing attention to the anecdotal aspect of images. According to Sontag photography:

reinforces a nominalist view of social reality as consisting of small units of an apparently infinite number – as the number of photographs that could be taken of anything is unlimited. Through photographs, the world becomes a series of unrelated, freestanding particles; and history, past and present, a set of anecdotes and *faits divers*. The camera makes reality atomic, manageable and opaque. (Sontag, 1990a: 22)

The anecdotal aspect of photographs that Sontag refers to echoes the third definition of the word anecdote – the depiction of a minor narrative incident in a painting. In *Istanbul: Memories of a City*, rather than offering an all-encompassing view, each photograph focuses on a specific scene thus offering a miniature narrative. This fragmented perspective of photography is what makes it

relevant for *Istanbul: Memories of a City* as the narrative, just like photography, focuses on individual insignificant events that acquire new meanings with each representation. The photographs reflect the fragmented, anecdotal constitution of the narrative by focusing on the atomic events rather than showing a panoramic view.

The photographs of *Istanbul: Memories of a City* reflect what Pamuk proposes about all forms of representation. Regardless of the lack of correspondence between the content of the images and the text, both the text and the images manifest how the meaning of Orhan and Istanbul is not an essential presence but rather is a constant play of difference enabled by their different representations. As Orhan notes in the first chapter of the narrative, this narrative is the result of a desire to give meaning to the otherwise meaningless conditions of one's life: 'Anyone who is interested in assigning meaning to life, at least once, questions the meaning of the time and place of his birth' (Pamuk, 2003: 15, *my translation*).⁷⁸

Following this statement that sheds light on the overall structure of the narrative, Orhan gives an account of his birth. With its focus on the insignificant and peripheral, this portrayal exemplifies not only the effect of the photographs but also the effect of *Istanbul: Memories of a City*:

I was born in the middle of the night on 7 June 1952, in a small private hospital in Moda. Its corridors, I'm told, were peaceful that night, and so was the world. Aside from the Strombolini Volcano's having suddenly begun to spew flames and ash two days earlier, relatively little seems to have been happening on our planet. The newspapers were full of small news – a few stories about the Turkish troops fighting in Korea, a few rumours spread by the Americans stoking fears that the Northern Koreans might be preparing to use

⁷⁸ In order to underline the clear reference to 'assigning meaning' evident in the Turkish original, I have offered my own translation. In the English edition the same sentence appears as follows: 'At least once in a lifetime, self-reflection leads us to examine the circumstance of our birth' (Pamuk, 2006: 6).

biological weapons. In the hours before I was born, my mother had been avidly following a local story: two days earlier, the caretakers and 'heroic' residents of the Konya Student Centre had seen a man in a terrifying mask trying to enter a house in Langa through the bathroom window; they'd chased him through the streets to a lumber yard, where, after cursing the police, the hardened criminal had committed suicide; a dry-goods seller identified the corpse as a gangster who the year before had entered his shop in broad daylight and had robbed him at gunpoint. (Pamuk, 2006: 7)

Orhan's birth is not a singular event that contains an essential meaning but is represented with the fragments of events that appear on the newspaper. It is the portrayal of these otherwise insignificant events that create a definition of Orhan's birth. These events, just like the birth of Orhan, do not contain an inherent meaning but rather are assigned different significance each time they are represented. The *faits divers* are thus transformed into 'an-other' through their representations in *Istanbul: Memories of a City*. Their repetition in a new context, far from consolidating an essential prior meaning, indicates how meaning is produced with the different representations as difference and deferral. The multiple stories that appear on the newspaper indicate that the event of Orhan's birth is not an originary pure presence but is always already constituted of various fragments.

The depiction of Orhan's birth makes this scene even more significant as it undermines all genesis stories that aim to determine a pure and singular origin. Whether it is the origin of the Turkish nation, the origin of the novel or the birth of Orhan all attempts to determine an originary meaning, as presence are doomed to fail.

B. Istanbul and Orhan

Istanbul is not only the geographical setting for most of Pamuk's novels but also a key component that both aesthetically and physically operates as an important symbol for the various issues that are raised in his writings. This inextricable link between the city and Pamuk's texts also results in misconceptions, which predominantly revolve around the coarse division between the East and the West. The city's divided geographical position on the two continents, Europe and Asia effortlessly appears as the reflection of the various dualities that occupy a central role in Pamuk's oeuvre. This divided structure of Istanbul has led to the construction of the city as a place where two distinct cultures meet, a place of encounter which, while facilitating dialogue, also underlines the separation between the two sides. What makes Pamuk's position interesting, however, is the challenge he brings to this symbolism that has been identified with the city of Istanbul. In his writings he uses Istanbul not to depict its role as a bridge between the two cultures but rather to call into question the fixed and pure definitions of this binary through which the East and the West has been defined. As the anecdote related by Maureen Freely indicates the perception of Istanbul in Pamuk's oeuvre, as a space of encounter for the two civilizations, has become such a well-established cliché that it is hard to alter.

The day after he heard that he had won the Nobel Prize, Orhan Pamuk invited a few of his friends to take part in a phone-in radio programme. The host was in Boston, Massachusetts. Orhan was in a studio in New York City. I was across the Atlantic, in a studio in English Midlands. The author and journalist Stephen Kinzer joined us from a studio in Chicago, and Jale Parla of Bilgi University spoke to us from Istanbul. The host was most hospitable. In jubilant tones, he

declared that no author had addressed the class⁷⁹ of civilizations as masterfully as Orhan Pamuk. So he kept saying, despite our combine efforts to convince him that it wasn't so. All right then, he said at one point. The author himself might not see his work as addressing the clash of civilizations. But Istanbul itself – this at least was beyond doubt – the place where East met West. And clashed. 'No! No! No!' we cried in unison. But he would not back down. (Freely, 2008: 146)

As the participants' combined effort to convince the host of the programme show the conventional view on Istanbul is that both culturally and geographically it symbolizes a place of meeting and conflict for the East and the West. Not only its representation in Pamuk's oeuvre but Istanbul itself is considered to be the space that inherently prompts a 'clash of civilizations'. Pamuk uses this commonplace as a starting point and far from enhancing the city's position as a space of harmonious encounter or fierce confrontation between the two opposing cultures he challenges the sterile definitions of the East and the West as binaries. For Pamuk Istanbul operates as a symbol of uncertainty rather than conflict. Far from appearing as a 'bridge' that would enhance a cordial encounter between the two sides of the binaries, Istanbul in Pamuk's texts appears as the epitome of the ambivalence that marks all attempts to offer a predetermined and singular definition of the 'self'.

In *Istanbul: Memories of a City* the city's role is not limited within the boundaries of the East/West opposition but resonates in relation with the definition of the 'self'. While portraying the city of Istanbul, Orhan is also providing significant clues regarding the definition of his 'self'. He explains the sources of this parallel by establishing an analogy between the city and his body:

I've never left Istanbul – never left the houses, streets and neighbourhoods of my childhood. Although I've lived in other districts from time to time, fifty years on I find myself back in the

⁷⁹ There appears to be a typographical error here, as I believe the more appropriate word is 'clash'. I nevertheless abide by the original text.

Pamuk Apartments, where my first photographs were taken and where my mother first held me in her arms to show me the world...But we live in an age defined by mass migration and creative immigrants, and so I am sometimes hard-pressed to explain why I've stayed not only in the same place, but the same building...Conrad, Nabokov, Naipul – these are writers known for having managed to migrate between languages, cultures, countries, continents, even civilizations. Their imaginations were fed by the exile, a nourishment drawn not through roots but through rootlessness; *mine, however, requires that I stay in the same city, on the same street, in the same house, gazing at the same view. Istanbul's fate is my fate: I am attached to this city because it has made me who I am.... I've accepted the city into which I was born in the same way I've accepted my body...This is my fate, and there's no sense arguing with it. This book is about fate...* (Pamuk, 2006: 5, *my emphasis*)

The connection between the city and the narrator is almost an organic one that resembles the one he has with his body. Just as he cannot abandon his body, Orhan cannot leave Istanbul. Orhan's attempt to have an understanding of the chaotic organization of the city is also indicative of his effort to attain a definition of his 'self'. That is why anything he says about the city will also be about his 'self':

But here we have come full circle, for anything we say about the city's essence, says more about our own lives and our own states of mind. *The city has no other centre than ourselves.* (Pamuk, 2006: 316)

Orhan's journey through the streets of Istanbul and his childhood memories is not a quest to find an underlying definition that inherently belongs to Istanbul or Orhan. He is not searching for what already exists within the city but rather is looking for ways to re-invent it as *his own*. Thus *Istanbul: Memories of a City* emerges not as the particular story of Orhan or Istanbul but explores the different ways through which we form our identities: 'Why should we expect a city to cure us of our spiritual pains? Perhaps because we cannot help loving our city like a family. But we still have to decide which part of the city we love and *invent* the reasons why.' (Pamuk, 2006: 317, *my emphasis*)

Within this framework I will follow Orhan in his quest focusing on three major themes: the use of black-and-white, ruins and the feeling of *hüzün*. I will demonstrate how these prevailing themes through which Orhan re-constructs his city reverberate in his construction of ‘an-other’ Orhan.

Istanbul remained the capital of Ottoman Empire from its proclamation in 1453 until 1922. Following the foundation of the Turkish Republic, in an attempt to disconnect from that historical and cultural heritage, Ankara was made the new capital in 1923. The new capital not only marked a new beginning but also symbolized the severance of the ties with the Ottoman Empire. Istanbul, the admirable capital, suddenly became the city where the gradual decline of the glamorous days of the Ottoman Empire could be observed.

Flaubert, who visited Istanbul a hundred and two years before my birth, was struck by the variety of life in its teeming streets; in one of his letters he predicted that in a century’s time it would be the capital of the world. The reverse came true: after the Ottoman Empire collapsed, the world almost forgot that Istanbul existed. The city into which I was born was poorer, shabbier, and more isolated than it had ever been its two-thousand-year history. (Pamuk, 2006: 6)

Following the foundation of the Turkish Republic, a radical series of reforms took place under the direction of Kemal Atatürk; these reforms that aimed to create a new society for the new Turkish state covered a wide range that included political, financial, social and cultural aspects. These reforms were not mere bureaucratic initiatives but had direct impact on people’s lives, altering radically their everyday experience. Thus Turkish society following the War of Independence found itself in an ambivalent position where the link with the Eastern past was severed and they were expected to conform to the new Western ideals. Under the guidance of the reforms an experience of modernity was being

simulated. Orhan's initial encounter with this experience of modernity takes place in the Pamuk Apartments, Nişantaşı.

The Nişantaşı⁸⁰ neighbourhood, before becoming the pillar of modernity for the Istanbul elite, was made popular during the later years of the Ottoman Empire. As the name indicates the area was frequented by the sultans who practised shooting in this not yet populated district. As Orhan notes the district's link with modernity was already evident as it was frequented by the Westernising sultans:

Westernising sultans of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century (Selim III and Mahmut II) who placed stone tablets in the empty hills above the city in those areas where they practised shooting and archery; the tablets marked the spot where an arrow landed or where an empty earthenware pot was shattered by a bullet and usually carried a line or two describing the occasion. When the Ottoman Sultans, fearing tuberculosis and desirous of Western comforts, as well as a change of scene, abandoned Topkapı Palace for new palaces in Dolmabahçe and Yıldız, their viziers and princes began to build for themselves wooden mansions in the hills of nearby Nişantaşı. (Pamuk, 2006: 24)

The changing cultural and political structure resulted in new ownership for these mansions, which were gradually demolished to make space for taller buildings fit for a more modern lifestyle. The wooden mansions with their large gardens could no longer accommodate the growing population. As the narrator notes: 'By the late fifties, most of them had been burned down or demolished to make way for apartment buildings.' (Pamuk, 2006: 24) The Pamuk Apartments is one such construction 'built at the edge of a large plot of land in Nişantaşı that had once been the garden of a pasha's mansion' (Pamuk, 2006: 24). The move of the Pamuk family from an old mansion to the apartment building,⁸¹ while

⁸⁰ Nişantaşı means 'target stone'.

⁸¹ Pamuk in his first novel *Cevdet Bey and Sons* portrays a similar episode. The mansion where the Işıkçı family lives is destroyed following Cevdet Bey's death. In its place modern apartments are built.

reflecting the changing architectural needs, shows the reluctance to abandon the traditional way of life.

My mother, my father, my older brother, my grandmother, my uncles and my aunts – we all lived on different floors of the same five-storey apartment block. Until the year before I was born, the different branches of the family had (like so many large Ottoman families) lived together in a large stone mansion; in 1951 they rented it out to a private primary school and built the modern structure I would know as home on the empty lot next door; on the façade, in keeping with the custom of the time, they proudly put up a plaque that said ‘Pamuk Apt.’ (Pamuk, 2006: 9)

Despite the move to the modern building the traditional family structure is maintained with all the family members living together, though on the different floors of the building. The communal family life is further emphasized with the doors that are left open: ‘Because the traffic between floors was as incessant as it had been in the Ottoman mansions, doors in our modern apartment building were usually left open.’ (Pamuk, 2006: 10)

The impact of the modernization movement can also be observed within the apartments, which contain Western living rooms that Orhan compares to ‘little museums designed to demonstrate to a hypothetical visitor that the householders were Westernised.’ (Pamuk, 2006: 10) The ‘unplayed pianos’, ‘locked glass cabinet’ that displayed items ‘no one ever touched’ as well as ‘unused desks with mother-of-pearl inlay’ are all indicative of the artificial effect of modernity. Rather than taking active parts in the inhabitants’ lives, these objects are put on display as if they were in a museum. These objects, which rather than being active components of the every day life remain as passive witnesses, illustrate how the modernization movement remained an artificial construction that failed to permeate the deeper levels of society. The abrupt and compulsory application of

the reforms during the early years of the Republic resulted in the creation of such ‘museums’, which merely presented modern appearances.

For Orhan these rooms filled with unused objects have a ghostly aspect; they appear as if they were ‘...furnished not for the living but for the dead.’ (Pamuk, 2006: 10) The impact of these rooms grows stronger as Orhan connects them to a more general feeling of loss, resulting from the fall of the Ottoman Empire. These rooms that are filled with objects cause Orhan to experience that loss on a more personal level: ‘... it was a long time coming, arriving by a circuitous route, but the cloud of gloom and loss that the fall of the Ottoman Empire had spread over Istanbul finally claimed my family, too.’ (Pamuk, 2006: 16)

Accordingly, rather than enjoying his time in these apartments, Orhan tries to find alternative ways of escape. One method is the use of his imagination which takes him anywhere he wants: ‘And in the cluttered gloom of my grandmother’s sitting room, in the shadow of its coffee tables and glass cabinets, its vases and framed photographs, I could dream I was somewhere else.’ (Pamuk, 2006: 16) The second method is the outings with his mother:

The only other escape was to go out with my mother. Because it was not yet the custom to take children to parks or gardens for their daily fresh air, the days I went out with my mother were important events... I would inspect my clothes in the reflection and my mother make sure all my buttons were buttoned; once outside I would exclaim in amazement, ‘The street!’ (Pamuk, 2006: 27)

Early on in his life, Istanbul emerges as an important presence for Orhan, offering him an alternative new world to escape to. The streets of Istanbul are not only a new world waiting to be discovered but also a refuge where he can take shelter, hiding away from the gloomy atmosphere of his grandmother’s house.

The impact of the city becomes even stronger when it is juxtaposed with the darkness of the Pamuk apartments: ‘Sun, fresh air, light. Our house was so dark sometimes that stepping out was like opening the curtains too abruptly on a summer’s day – the light would hurt my eyes.’ (Pamuk, 2006: 27) Although light dominates Orhan’s initial encounter with the city, it quickly gains a shadier tone, in accordance with the gloomy feelings that he experiences in the Pamuk apartments. Rather than succumbing to the bright atmosphere of the city Orhan starts perceiving it as a reflection of the gloomy feelings that dominates the Pamuk Apartments. He thus creates ‘an-other’ Istanbul that would mirror his feelings, in a black-and-white city: ‘Until we could travel home again, the streets, the apartments, and even the trees were in black and white.’ (Pamuk, 2006: 30)

The sudden change in his impression of the city is worth noting as it displays how Orhan’s perception of the city is independent of the actual views that the city offers. The initial sunny and bright Istanbul that disturbed his eyes quickly becomes a black-and-white space, echoing the interiors of the Pamuk Apartments. The absence of any external elements that would alter Orhan’s perception so quickly suggests that this black-and-white view of the city is Orhan’s own impression, rather than being an effect generated by Istanbul.

As Orhan had noted earlier alongside our personal memories we also ‘let others shape our understanding of the city in which we live’ (Pamuk, 2006: 8). Accordingly Orhan relies heavily on the works of ‘other’ artists to obtain the black-and-white imagery of Istanbul; in addition to the photographs there are paintings and written accounts of different artists that contribute to the construction of his Istanbul. Due to the absence of a Western style painting tradition in the Ottoman Empire, the visual representations of the city are mostly

by Western artists: 'If we see our city in black-and-white, it's partly because we know it from the engravings left to us by Western artists: the glorious colours of its past were never painted by local hands.' (Pamuk, 2006: 39)

One of the most important artists whose paintings have contributed greatly to the creation of Orhan's Istanbul is Antoine-Ignace Melling (1763-1831). Portraying the city's landscapes, Melling's paintings also offer an extensive representation of daily life during eighteenth century Istanbul. For Orhan these paintings are not merely important for their documentary value but also because they depict the glorious days of the city. Alongside their beautiful depictions the paintings are also a source of sadness for the viewer who contemplates the city in its lost glamour. Melling's paintings are favoured because they confirm the melancholic feeling that dominates the city in its post-empire era.

But even as I allow myself to be transported, I am aware that part of what makes Melling's paintings so beautiful is the sad knowledge that what they depict no longer exists. Perhaps I look at these paintings precisely because they do make me sad. (Pamuk, 2006: 55)

The sadness that Orhan experiences while contemplating Melling's paintings is in parallel with his experience of Istanbul, as a city that has lost its glamour. As a result of this parallel Orhan prefers Melling's black-and-white engravings to his coloured ones:

My contemporaries tend to overlook the subtly coloured gouaches of imperial Istanbul painted by Melling, about whom I shall have more to say later; accepting of their fate and seeking convenience, they prefer to see their past in a more easily reproduced monochrome. For when they gaze into a colourless image, they see their melancholy confirmed. (Pamuk, 2006: 40)

Orhan too prefers the black-and-white engravings because they confirm the shadowy tones in which he perceives Istanbul. He deems these engravings more befitting of the Istanbul that he constructs in the tones of grey.

Consequently neither the gloomy atmosphere of the Pamuk Apartments nor the black-and-white view of Istanbul are produced by these spaces but rather are the result of Orhan's perception of them. Rather than having an inherent essential meaning, it is Orhan who assigns these spaces with a specific significance depending on his feelings. Just like the photographs, which by capturing a certain moment, assign it with a distinct meaning, Orhan too transforms these spaces into something new by recording them as the reflections of his own feelings. Without limiting its scope to the representation of Istanbul, *Istanbul: Memories of a City* shows how all attempts to represent, whether it is the 'self' or the city will also involve a re-invention through the possibility of modification. Far from emerging as the exact repetition of the same, all representation will inherently change its subject, making it 'an-other'. As Orhan's portrayal of the city demonstrates, his representation of Istanbul can never be an objective documentation, but will inevitable result in the creation of 'an-other' Istanbul.

I remember how troubled I was the first time I looked at this same view from the same angle, and notice how different the view looks now. It's not my memory that's false – the view looked troubled then because I myself was troubled, I poured my soul in the city's streets and there it still resides.⁸² (Pamuk, 2006: 313)

⁸² The Turkish original of this passage is slightly different as it draws attention to the bringing together of the vistas of the city with the personal feelings. I suggest the following translation: 'To look at the landscape of the city is to combine those vistas with the feelings that Istanbul offers while walking along the streets, cruising by the boat. However these are not the only ways to view the landscapes of the city; to view the city also means connecting your mood with the views that the city offers to you. Associating your feelings with the scenes of the city with talent and honesty also means combining those images that are marked in your memory with the deepest and frankest emotions such as pain, sorrow, melancholy and sometimes with happiness, joy of life and optimism.'

Orhan does not passively contemplate the views of the city but rather actively changes them by transmitting his own feelings into those views. In addition to operating as a mirror that reflects Orhan's impressions Istanbul also emerges as a space that is being re-invented based on the feelings with which Orhan contemplates them. The primary change that takes place in this process is the hue of the city; for Orhan Istanbul is a black-and-white city. The black-and-white is not limited to the fifth chapter entitled 'Black and White' but appears as the dominant theme throughout the narrative. Further emphasized with the photographs that are all in black-and-white, this monochromic portrayal materializes as the primary quality of Orhan's Istanbul.

Before discussing the implications of this monochromic vision and how it relates to the definition of identity it is important to study what Orhan's black-and-white consists of. Despite the binary view that is implied with its name, Orhan's black-and-white vision is not obtained with the rigid separation of the black from the white. It is not depicted as a clear tone that distinguishes between the black and the white but rather appears as a shadowy and blurry hue. As a reflection of this dim atmosphere created by the black-and-white the various sights that Orhan describes are dominated by words that reflect a dark and blurry sight rather than a sharp black-and-white. In the different neighbourhoods that Orhan lists, the black-and-white can be observed on 'smoky mornings':

There are places – in Tepebasi, Galata, Fatih and Zeyrek, a few of the villages along the Bosphorus, the back streets of Üsküdar – where the black-and-white haze I've been trying to describe is still in evidence. On *misty, smoky* mornings, on rainy, windy nights, you can see it on the domes of mosques on which flocks of gulls make their homes; you can see it, too, in the *clouds of exhaust*, in the wreathes of soot rising from stovepipes, in the rusting rubbish bins, the parks and gardens left empty and untended on winter days, and the crowds scurrying home

through *the mud* and the snow on winter evenings; these are the sad joys of black-and-white Istanbul. (Pamuk, 2006: 35, *my emphasis*)

Not only the city itself but also its inhabitants convey dark shades that are similar to the mood of the city:

To see the city in black and white, to see the haze that sits over it, and breathe in the melancholy its inhabitants have embraced as their common fate, you need only to fly in from a rich Western city and head straight to the crowded streets; if it's winter, every man on the Galata Bridge will be wearing the same *pale, drab, shadowy* clothes. The Istanbulis of my era have shunned the vibrant reds, greens and oranges of their rich, proud ancestors; to foreign visitors, it looks as if they have done so deliberately, to make a moral point. They have not – but there is in their dense melancholy a suggestion of modesty. This is how you dress in a black-and-white city, they seem to be saying; this is how you grieve for a city that has been in decline for a hundred and fifty years. (Pamuk, 2006: 38, *my emphasis*)

Establishing a parallel with the history of the city, Orhan claims that these colours reflect the mourning of a glorious past. According to the narrator the inhabitants of Istanbul prefer dark coloured clothes to indicate that they are still mourning the loss of the glorious days of their city. Even the dogs of the city appear to be in harmony with the mourning process. Their indefinable colours reflect the black-and-white vision of Orhan's Istanbul: 'They all look alike, their coats all the same colour for which no one has a name – a colour somewhere *between grey and charcoal*, that is no colour at all.' (Pamuk, 2006: 39, *my emphasis*)

The black-and-white vision of the city, which Orhan describes as dark, shadowy and grey is not complete without the steam coming from the ships on the Bosphorus. In line with the colours of the dogs and the clothes that the inhabitants of Istanbul prefer, the steam contributes to the grey hue of the city.

When the smoke thickened into a cloud, especially when rising from all the funnels of all the ships moored around Galata Bridge, it was as if my world was being wrapped in a *black veil*. Walking along the

shores of the Bosphorus or travelling in a ferry, I loved passing under the swirling *smoke* of a vessel long departed: if the wind was right, a dry rain of millions of tiny *black particles* would settle like a cobweb on my face with the smell of burnt mineral. (Pamuk, 2006: 254, *my emphasis*)

As the above passages demonstrate the black-and-white vision of the city is described with words that reflect a tone that is neither fully black nor entirely white. 'Grey', 'charcoal', 'shadow', 'mud' and 'smoke' are all recurrent words that are used to describe the colours of the city. Despite the general black-and-white aura, the colour of the city cannot be defined precisely; very much like the colour of the dogs, the colour of Istanbul remains a colour 'for which no one has a name'. Within this framework the definition of the city's colour lies in the inability to offer an exact definition, remaining in the ambivalent space reflected with the tones of grey.

Challenging the imagery of the bridge, that conventionally defines Istanbul culturally, historically and geographically as a place of conflict and encounter, Pamuk offers a distinct view. The shadowy tones that remain in between the black and the white reflect the ambivalence that marks Istanbul. Taking into account the East/West opposition, rather than defining the city based on this binary view Pamuk offers an alternative perspective that cannot be incorporated within the oppositional perspective. Neither fully black nor entirely white, the colour of the city is depicted as a shadowy, smoky tone that cannot be defined precisely. Without enforcing a choice between the black and the white or defining the city as a transitory space that enables passage from one side of the binary to the other, Pamuk proposes a city that refuses to be defined within the confines of a singular definition. The ambivalent state that emerges in between the black and the white is distinct from the imagery of the bridge as unlike the bridge

that reflects a temporary space used only to move in between two fixed and originary positions, the colour of Istanbul underlines the permanence of the ambivalence, without introducing any fixed predetermined points of certainty. Thus the grey hue does not depict a provisional aspect that needs to be overcome in order to reach the clarity of either the black or the white but rather is portrayed as the permanent state of Istanbul. In addition to the shadowy tone the inability to provide a specific name for that colour further develops Istanbul's ambivalent position. This ambivalence as portrayed in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* far from being an uncomfortable state that needs to be overcome emerges as the only possible definition of the city. As a result, with *Istanbul: Memories of a City*, Pamuk offers an Istanbul that remains 'in-between', in the ambivalent region that refuses such definitions.

The ambivalence that defines the colour of the city prevails in the attempt to define the genre of the narrative. *Istanbul: Memories of a City*, as a narrative that brings together various elements including personal memories, historical anecdotes, selections from different artists as well as newspaper clips, challenges a singular definition. In addition to the multiplicity of elements, Orhan's reluctance to distinguish between real and hearsay memories prevent an ultimate definition regarding the genre of the narrative. Similar to the city of Istanbul, *Istanbul: Memories of a City* too remains in the ambivalent space 'in-between'; with its fragmented constitution the narrative offers a definition of the city as perpetual displacement.

In parallel to the definitions of Istanbul's colour and the genre of the narrative, the attempt to define Orhan's identity too remains ambivalent. The reference to 'an-other' Orhan not only creates uncertainty regarding the genre of

the narrative but also calls into question a unique and fixed definition for the ‘self’. The reference to ‘an-other’ Orhan prevents the reading of the narrative as the only story of a singular and authentic ‘self’. Despite problematizing a homogenous, singular ‘self’, the ‘an-other’ Orhan is not defined in opposition to an original Orhan. ‘An-other’ Orhan is different from the antagonistic ‘other’ in the sense that it emerges as distinct from, yet also similar to, Orhan. While the autobiographical details suggest that the creation of ‘an-other’ Orhan will inevitably be similar to Orhan, the use of hearsay memories underlines its fictional constitution. As a result just like the ambivalence that prevails in the definitions of the narrative and the city, the definition of Orhan too becomes possible as ‘an-other’ Orhan who acquires different significances through different representations. *Istanbul: Memories of a City* both in its constitution and with the portrayals of Istanbul and Orhan provides a definition of identity as always already fragmented and impossible to define with certainty.

While the black-and-white visually depicts the aura of Orhan’s Istanbul, its textual equivalent emerges as the word *hüzün*. Alongside the tenth chapter entitled ‘*Hüzün*’⁸³ that offers an extensive definition of the word and its meaning for Orhan and the city, both the word and the feeling it generates are diffused throughout the narrative. When the word *hüzün* is used for the first time in the narrative it is juxtaposed with the term melancholy. As Orhan notes, both words refer to a feeling that results from loss yet unlike melancholy *hüzün* also contains a collective dimension that portrays a feeling shared by a community of people:

We might call this confused, hazy state melancholy, or perhaps we should call it by its Turkish name, *hüzün*, which denotes a melancholy that is communal rather than private. Offering no clarity; veiling

⁸³ The title of the tenth chapter appears as ‘Hüzün – Melankoli – Tristesse’ in the Turkish original. In the English translation the same chapter is entitled ‘*Hüzün*’.

reality instead, *hüzün* brings us comfort, softening the view like the condensation on a window when a tea kettle has been spouting steam on a winter's day. Steamed-up windows make me feel *hüzün*, and I still love getting up and walking over to those windows to trace words on them with my finger. As I trace out words and figures on the steamy window, the *hüzün* inside me dissipates, and I can relax after I have done all my writing and drawing, I can erase it all with the back of my hand and look outside. But the view itself can bring its own *hüzün*. (Pamuk, 2006: 79)

Similar to the black-and-white aura of the city the word *hüzün* connotes a hazy impression. Orhan compares its effect to the steam that covers the windows thus suggesting that far from offering a lucid perception of the city, *hüzün* promotes further confusion and ambiguity. *Hüzün* is not merely the result of the individual's emotional state but the views of the city too create their own *hüzün*. Both Orhan and the city of Istanbul are intrinsically tied to the feeling of *hüzün* complying with the ambiguous definition of their identities. In addition to the ambiguity, *hüzün* is also associated with creativity as Orhan compares it to the steamy window that invites writing and drawing. Thus *hüzün*, just like the definition of Orhan's and Istanbul's identities, rather than offering a final definition, indicates further possibilities of meaning as dissemination. The steamy window that represents *hüzün*, invites Orhan to write and draw on it. It is through these different representations that the definition of *hüzün* emerges as dissemination.

The etymological root of the word *hüzün* indicates its link to loss; similar to melancholy *hüzün* too is the result of a profound loss.

Hüzün, the Turkish word for melancholy, has an Arabic root; when it appears in the Koran (as '*huzn*' in two verses and '*hazen*' in three others) it means much the same thing as the contemporary Turkish word. The Prophet Mohammed referred to the year in which he lost both his wife Hatice and his uncle, Ebu Talip, as '*Senettul huzn*', or the year of melancholy; this confirms that the word is meant to convey a feeling of deep spiritual loss. (Pamuk, 2006: 81)

Drawing on the parallels between mourning and melancholy it was Sigmund Freud in *Mourning and Melancholia* who established loss as the primary source for melancholy. According to Freud not only death but also other occurrences that disrupt the love-hate balance may lead to symptoms of melancholia:

For the most part, the causes of melancholia go beyond the clear case of loss through death, and include all the situations of insult, slight, setback and disappointment through which an opposition of love and hate can be introduced to the relationship, or an *ambivalence* already present can be intensified. This conflict of *ambivalence*, now more real, now more constitutive in origin, should not be neglected among the preconditions of melancholia. (Freud, 2006: 318, *my emphasis*)

The ambivalence to which Freud draws attention plays an important role not only to understand melancholy but also to analyse the reverberations of *hüzün* in *Istanbul: Memories of a City*. Throughout the narrative *hüzün*'s link to loss is mainly portrayed in relation with the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Istanbul that used to be the glamorous capital of a powerful empire has lost its appeal as the Ottoman Empire had declined. For Orhan the physical effects of this loss that can be observed throughout Istanbul constitute the primary cause of the feeling of *hüzün* that the city generates. What was lost with the decline of the Ottoman Empire wasn't only a rich capital but also an ideal and authentic definition of identity as the people could not identify with the new modern Westernised ideal offered by the reforms that included a new alphabet and a new dress code. In Lacanian terms, with the fall of the empire the ideal and unified mirror image with which people identified in order to construct a 'self' was also lost.

With the foundation of the Turkish Republic and the subsequent modernization movements, a new ideal image is offered. The reforms while eliminating all traces of the Ottoman rule, offered the Western way of life as the

new ideal image with which people needed to identify. Despite the radical changes that were implemented these reforms remained unused like the objects in the Pamuk Apartments. Similar to Orhan's grandmother's museum house that exhibits all the necessary elements of a modern household but does not incorporate them into the everyday life, the people too remained unable to identify with the new modern image that the Republic offered. As a result, deprived of their Ottoman heritage and unable to identify with the new ideal modern image the people of the Turkish Republic remained in a state of ambivalence regarding their identities. The *hüzün* that dominates the city and its inhabitants is thus not only derived from the feeling of loss but also is created by this state of ambivalence. The shadowy tones that define the city for Orhan are also indicative of this state of ambivalence.

Istanbul: Memories of a City, while depicting the wider scope of *hüzün* in relation with the city and its inhabitants, also portrays Orhan's personal *hüzün* which results from the state of ambivalence that he finds himself in. The game that he used to play as a child in front of the mirror displayed how instead of having a unique ideal image Orhan had multiple images reflected in the mirror. This multiplicity of images allow Orhan to represent him 'self' as various 'an-other' Orhans. The multiple representations of Orhan as 'an-other' offer a distinct experience of the mirror stage where identification is not aimed to reach a final closure but rather becomes possible as displacement. Consequently Orhan's *hüzün* is not the expression of the loss of a prior definition of the 'self' but rather indicates the state of ambivalence generated with the multiple mirror images. *Hüzün* through its clouding effect, while impeding the definition of a firm and unique identity of the 'self', offers innumerable possibilities where Orhan can re-

invent his ‘self’ as ‘an-other’. It thus emerges not as a negative feeling that needs to be discarded but rather as a feeling that encourages creativity. As indicated by the steam on the window that enables writing and drawing, *hüzün* rather than providing an ultimate closure, enables the definition of the ‘self’ as a perpetual dissemination of meaning.

Despite operating within similar semantic fields melancholy and *hüzün* are not used interchangeably. According to the narrator melancholy reflects the point of view of an outsider, ‘*hüzün*, on the other hand, is not a feeling that belongs to the outside observer.’ (Pamuk, 2006: 93) Although the two concepts reflect two distinct perspectives there is nevertheless an indisputable connection between them that Orhan explains by looking at the writings of Western travellers and Turkish authors who have contributed to the creation of the image of the city as a melancholic place.

Gérard de Nerval (1808-1855) and Théophile Gautier (1811-1872) are the two principal authors who have contributed to the creation of the melancholic aura of Istanbul. Both authors have visited the city and wrote not only about the touristic sites but also ventured into the poor back streets where they discovered the melancholic beauty of the city. While Nerval found the city to be the expression of his own melancholy, Gautier explored the back streets with a journalistic curiosity. As Orhan explains Gautier ‘had the sort of eye that could find melancholic beauty amid dirt and disorder’ (Pamuk, 2006: 205) and thus portrayed a melancholic Istanbul that he witnessed during his trips into the backstreets of the city. The writings of these Western travellers are important because their melancholic portrayal of the city constitutes the basis of the feeling of *hüzün*:

In the last one hundred and fifty years (1850- 2000) I have no doubt that not only was *hüzün* ruled over Istanbul, but it has spread to its surrounding areas. What I have been trying to explain is that the roots of our *hüzün* are European: the concept was first explored, expressed, and poeticised in French (by Gautier, under the influence of his friend Nerval). (Pamuk, 2006: 210)

By drawing attention to the Western origins of the feeling of *hüzün*, far from advocating an Orientalist gaze Orhan highlights the impossibility of a ‘pure’ definition of the city’s identity. As the writings of the Western travellers indicate, even what is considered to be exclusive to the insider’s point of view, may already be a product of the ‘outsider’s’ perspective. Without introducing a hierarchical perspective that would prioritize the Western travellers’ accounts, Orhan underlines the impossibility of a pure and originary depiction of the city.

Orhan cites two Turkish authors who have followed the example set by the Western travellers in an attempt to create an ‘authentic’ Turkish definition for Istanbul: Yahya Kemal (1884-1958) and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962). Similar to the Western travellers Tanpınar and Kemal too have ventured into the poorer districts of Istanbul in order to obtain a purely Turkish image for their city. As Orhan explains their attempt was not restricted to aesthetic concerns but mainly motivated by the desire to show that regardless of the destruction it underwent Istanbul was still an appealing place. To them *hüzün* generated by the ruins of the past symbolized the prevailing beauty of Istanbul.

They had a political agenda: they were picking their way through the ruins looking for signs of a new Turkish state, a new Turkish nationalism... To prove that this was a Turkish city, these two writers knew that it was not enough to describe the skyline so beloved of Western tourist and writers, or the shadows cast by its mosques and churches. Dominated as it was by Hagia Sophia, the skyline noted by every Western observer from Lamartine to le Corbusier could not serve as a ‘national image’ for Turkish Istanbul – *this sort of beauty was too cosmopolitan*. Nationalist Istanbulers like Yahya Kemal and Tanpınar preferred to look to the poor, defeated and deprived Muslim population to prove that they had not lost one bit of their identity, and

to satisfy their craving for a mournful beauty expressing the feelings of loss and defeat. This is why they went out on walks to poor neighbourhoods in search of beautiful sights that endowed the city's dwellers with the *hüzün* of the ruined past; they found it by following the footsteps of Gautier. (Pamuk, 2006: 225, *my emphasis*)

Thus the *hüzün* that they found in the backstreets of Istanbul was not only an aesthetic element but also a political symbol that allowed them to construct a pure Turkish identity. It is with this feeling of *hüzün* that these two writers aimed to obtain an authentic Turkish image of Istanbul. As Orhan notes, however, even in their attempt to obtain a pure definition, they were following the footsteps of the Western travellers. The *hüzün* that they believed to be the symbol of a purely Turkish Istanbul had its roots in the writings of Western travellers.

Orhan adopts a distinct attitude in his representation of the city by remaining in the ambivalent zone that enables production of meaning. Rather than choosing between the insider's or the outsider's point of view Orhan prefers to 'see the city from many different points of view and thereby maintain the vitality of [his] connection to it' (Pamuk, 2006: 217). Instead of adhering to a fixed position, Orhan prefers to experience both perspectives as different mirror images that provide a definition of the city's identity as dissemination.

Sometimes when I read about the things that never change – some of the main streets and side alleys, the wooden houses somehow still standing, the street vendors, the empty lots and the *hüzün*, all that is as it was despite a tenfold increase in population – I will lull myself into believing the accounts of Western outsiders are my own memories. (Pamuk, 2006: 218)

Orhan can easily appropriate the accounts of the Western travellers as his own memories, since they depict parts of the city that have remained intact over the years. The enduring qualities of the city constitute a common ground where

the experience of the Western travellers at the beginning of the nineteenth century coincide with Orhan's experience of the city during the 1970s.

Taking his appropriation a step further, Orhan argues that 'to savour Istanbul's back streets, to appreciate the vines and trees that endow its ruins with accidental grace, you must, first and foremost, be a 'stranger' to them.' (Pamuk, 2006: 231) For Orhan the outsider's or the stranger's gaze is not necessarily a Westerner's account about the city but rather is a reflection of his own definition of his 'self'; it is 'an-other' Istanbul. Without professing an Orientalist perspective, Orhan explains how the everyday encounters of the city can only acquire meaning when represented as 'an-other' from a 'stranger's' point of view. Far from defining the two positions – the insider and the outsider – as binaries Orhan displays how the 'self' of the city is always already composed of various fragments that appear as the multiple mirror images. It is by becoming 'an-other' Orhan that he can represent the city as 'an-other' Istanbul.

For people like me, Istanbul with one foot in this culture and one in the other, the 'Western traveller' is often not a real person – *he can be my own creation, my fantasy, even my own reflection*. But being unable to depend on tradition alone as my text, I am grateful to the outsider who can offer me a complementary version – whether a piece of writing, a painting, a film. *So whenever I sense the absence of Western eyes, I become my own Westerner*. (Pamuk, 2006: 260, *my emphasis*)

Kemal and Tanpınar aimed to distinguish between their accounts and the Westerners' accounts in order to obtain a purely Turkish representation of the city. For them the Westerners' accounts represented an ideal mirror image that they needed to identify with in order to be able to create an authentic definition of their own and the city's identities. Just like the Western travellers who portrayed the melancholic image of Istanbul, Kemal and Tanpınar too aimed to obtain an authentic image of the city that would reflect its authentic Turkish identity. They

thus created an ideal mirror image that was based on the Western models. They strived to identify with that ideal fantasy in order to arrive at a conclusive and pure definition of Turkish identity.

For Orhan, on the other hand, the mirror image is not a unique ideal but rather is always already created with different fragments that enable identification not as a total correspondence but as perpetual displacement. It is the multiplicity of mirror images that allow him to be his ‘own Westerner’ to be ‘an-other’ Orhan. Orhan’s definition of the ‘self’, unlike what Kemal and Tanpınar delineated, is similar to the grey tones of Istanbul in that not only it prevents a singular and fixed definition but also it obliterates a clear-cut separation between the black and the white. Just like the shadowy tones of Istanbul, Orhan’s definition of his ‘self’ remains in the ambiguous zone between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’, as ‘an-other’; it is in that ambivalent zone in-between that he can create *his* vision of the city.

As I waver back and forth, sometimes seeing the city from within and sometimes from without I feel as I do when I am wandering the streets, caught in a stream of slippery, contradictory thoughts, not quite belonging to this place, and not quite a stranger. This is how the people of Istanbul have felt for the last hundred and fifty years. (Pamuk, 2006: 261)

The feeling of *hüzün* and its veiling effect are indicative not only of Orhan’s experience of the city but also his ‘self’. For Orhan both Istanbul and his ‘self’ are defined with this sense of ambiguity and the blurry effect that the feeling of *hüzün* offers. He states that ‘for the poet, *hüzün* is the smoky window between him and the world.’ (Pamuk, 2006: 93) This blurry zone created with the feeling of *hüzün* is what allows him to not only keep his relationship to the city alive but also provides him with the freedom of creativity. In that shadowy zone of *hüzün*

he can re-invent various Orhans in the same way that he can invent various Istanbul without prioritizing one over the other.

The special case of Istanbul according to Orhan lies in the visibility accorded to the ruins throughout the city. Unlike in other cities, in Istanbul the remnants of previous generations are not stored in museums but left in their original places, as constant reminders of a glorious past that no longer exists:

The difference lies in the fact that in Istanbul the remains of a glorious past and civilization are everywhere visible... These are nothing like the remains of great empires to be seen in Western cities, preserved like museums of history and proudly displayed. The people of Istanbul simply carry on with their lives amongst the ruins. (Pamuk, 2006: 91)

The ruins, however, are not only sad reminders of a glorious past that is lost, but with authors like Yahya Kemal and A. H. Tanpınar are transformed into symbols for a new Turkish identity. Following the footsteps of Western travellers, Tanpınar and Kemal ventured into the back streets of the city and used the image of the ruins as a source for the new authentic Turkish identity that they were trying to define. For them the ruins symbolized the greatness of the Turkish people who despite all the suffering and devastation was still capable of creating an authentic Turkish 'self'. Because the ruins did not appear in the Western portrayals of the city that focused on the touristic landscapes, they symbolized a pure Turkish ideal for Tanpınar and Kemal who praised the ruins 'to convey these neighbourhoods as traditional, unspoiled, and untouched by the West' (Pamuk, 2006: 227). They used the ruins to:

weave together a story from the fall of the Ottoman Republic, the nationalism of the early Republican years, its ruins, its Westernising project, its poetry and its landscapes. The result of this somewhat tangled tale was an image in which Istanbul could see themselves, and a dream to which they could aspire. We might call this dream, which grew out of the barren, isolated, destitute neighbourhoods beyond the city walls, the 'melancholy of the ruins', and if one looks

at these scenes through the eyes of an outsider (as Tanpınar did) it is possible to see them as picturesque. (Pamuk, 2006: 227)

Tanpınar and Kemal aimed to replace the loss of an Ottoman identity with the new ideal image of an authentic Turkish ‘self’ symbolized by the ruins. This new Turkish ‘self’ would operate as the ideal Lacanian mirror image that the people of Istanbul could see reflected in their mirrors. The ruins with their connection to a lost past emerge as the perfect symbol for Tanpınar who believed that the only possible way to create an authentic identity was to ‘go back to our selves’: ‘Tanpınar’s notion of culture was an organicist one, that of an inviolate culture having an integrity of its own. Hence he was for a cultural nationalism that was defined by a desire to “go back to our own selves”.’ (Gürbilek, 2003: 607)

In *Istanbul: Memories of a City*, however, the ruins are used to challenge such an ideal image both for the definition of the identity of the city and of Orhan. The ruins operate in the same ambivalent space as the unnameable colour of the city as well as the feeling of *hüzün*. Far from being portrayed as the symbols of a formerly unified and authentic identity, the ruins in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* manifest the inherent ambivalence that marks all attempts to obtain a totalizing representation of the ‘self’.

The effect that the ruins have in Istanbul is repeated in the narrative with the photographs. The relation between ruins and photography does not arise from images of ruins; photography as such establishes a thematic parallel with ruins. Drawing on the parallel between photography and architecture Susan Sontag states that in both photography and architecture the creations look better with the passage of time. According to Sontag:

Photography extends the eighteenth-century literati’s discovery of the beauty of ruins into a genuinely popular taste... the photographer is

willy-nilly engaged in the enterprise of antiquing reality, and photographs are themselves instant antiques. The photograph offers a modern counterpart of that characteristically romantic architectural genre, the artificial ruin: the ruin which is created in order to deepen the historical character of a landscape, to make nature suggestive – suggestive of the past. (Sontag, 1990a: 79)

Photography produces a ruinous effect in the sense that its subject emerges as worn-out thus evocative of a prior state that was ‘more’. The effect of photography may initially appear to support Tanpınar’s interest in the ruins as it suggests a prior and greater totality. What needs to be taken into account, however, is how photography can transform *anything* and *everything* into more significant objects. Photography’s transformative power thus problematizes the assumption of an inherent essential meaning that needs to be unravelled. Photography does not show the remnants of a previous totality but re-invents its subject by assigning it with new meanings. The photographed item does not appear as the fragments of an originary meaning but rather acquires its connotations by being represented in that photograph. The transformative power of photography indicates how reality far from being an intact whole with an inherent meaning that needs to be discovered, is composed of fragments that are brought together arbitrarily and are given meaning to by the individual representations. As Sontag states ‘... the arbitrariness of photographic evidence indicates that reality is fundamentally unclassifiable. Reality is summed up in an array of casual fragments – an endlessly alluring, poignantly reductive way of dealing with the world.’ (Sontag, 1990a: 80)

Within the framework of *Istanbul: Memories of a City* ruins have a similar effect to photography in the sense that rather than representing parts of a totality, a past that is lost, they display the always already fragmented perception of reality. Orhan’s experience of the ruins of the city, unlike Tanpınar’s, does not aim to

reach an authentic and unique definition of Turkish identity but rather emerges as the celebration of the impossibility to offer such an ultimate definition. With the ruins Orhan explores the multiple possibilities offered in the ambivalent zone that they create by remaining 'in-between'. For Orhan ruins make explicit the always already fragmented constitution of all definitions as they represent the impossibility of reaching an originary totality. The ruins for him are like *hüzün*, as they enable creativity without prescribing a predetermined meaning.

Similar to the photographs, the ruins too offer a fragmented view of the world. For Orhan this fragmented vision is not a temporary stage that needs to be eliminated to reach a unified whole but represents the impossibility of such a totalizing and unifying vision: 'Here among the old stones and the old wooden houses, history made peace with its ruins; ruins nourished life, and gave *new life to history...*' (Pamuk, 2006: 318, *my emphasis*) The ruins do not hint at a prior definition of history as a unique event but display the impossibility to reach a final interpretation.

Similar to the shadowy tones of the city and the feeling of *hüzün*, the ruins too introduce a blurry vision that celebrates ambivalence. As Derrida argues the ruin is not a subsequent event that disrupts a pre-existing unity but 'In the beginning, at the origin, there was ruin' (Derrida, 1993a: 65):

The ruin is not in front of us; it is neither a spectacle nor a love object. It is experience itself: neither the abandoned yet still monumental fragment of a totality, nor as Benjamin thought, simply a theme of baroque culture. It is precisely not a theme, for it ruins the theme, the position, the presentation or representation of anything and everything. Ruin is, rather, this memory open like an eye, or like the hole in a bone socket that lets you see without showing you anything *at all*, anything *of the all*. This, *for* showing you *nothing at all*, *nothing of the all*. (Derrida, 1993a: 69)

The ruin is not a subsequent event that disrupts the originary totality but rather is always already present. Rather than testifying to the disfigurement of an originary totality, the ruin confirms the impossibility of a prior intact *all*. Whether it is the Turkish identity that Tanpınar is trying to define or Orhan's representation of his 'self', all attempts to 'present and represent' are always already ruinous. That is why Istanbul's ruins are a comforting sight for Orhan who takes pleasure walking in the poor back streets of the city. The ruins of the city show Orhan that he does not have to fight against his inability to provide a totalizing, originary definition of his 'self'. The ruins, the veiling effect of *hüzün* and the blurry colour of the city provide him with a space where he can remain in the ambiguous space in-between; it is in that space that he can define his 'self' as 'an-other'. That is why rather than escaping from the ruins Orhan is looking for more ruins where he can find yet 'an-other' Orhan: 'I was slowly coming to understand that I loved Istanbul for its ruins, for its *hüzün*, for the glories once possessed and later lost. And so, to cheer myself up, I left Eyüp to wander around other neighbourhoods in search of ruins.' (Pamuk, 2006: 320)

The ruins in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* establish another important link with the memories. The memories as they appear in the narrative are not considered to be links to a totalizing representation of who Orhan is but rather appear as fragments that enable dissemination of meaning. The absence of a distinction between real and hearsay memories implies that for Orhan these memories are not clues that would allow him to restore an originary past but indicates how they are fragments that are used to re-invent 'an-other' Orhan. Very much like ruins, the memories too present a fragmented and ambiguous definition of Orhan's 'self', which fosters creativity with its multiplicity of possibilities. The

narrative that is created with memories, just like the ruins, displays the impossibility of obtaining an all-encompassing, totalizing originary representation. Derrida draws attention to the parallel between memories and ruins by highlighting their inability to restore an originary past. According to Derrida the self-portrait exemplifies this impossibility as it depicts the inherent blindness to represent the 'self' in its totality:

The ruin does not supervene like an accident upon a monument that was intact only yesterday. In the beginning there is ruin. Ruin is that which happens to the image from the moment of the first gaze. Ruin is the self-portrait, this face looked at in the face as the memory of itself, what *remains* or *returns* as a spectre from the moment one first looks at oneself and a figuration is eclipsed. The figure, the face, then sees its visibility being eaten away; it loses its integrity without disintegrating. For the incompleteness of the visible monument comes from the eclipsing structure of the *trait*, from a structure that is only remarked, pointed out, impotent or incapable of being reflected in the shadow of the self-portrait. So many reversible propositions. For one can just as well read the pictures of ruins as the figures of a portrait, indeed, a self-portrait. (Derrida, 1993a: 68)

As Derrida notes ruin is always already there at the moment of the first gaze, which obliterates the equation of the 'self' with 'presence'. Just like the presence captured in photography, which needs to be divisible in order to be recorded, the gaze into the mirror too challenges the integrity of the 'self' by 'eclipsing' its totality. In the case of *Istanbul: Memories of a City* Orhan creates his self-portrait through writing and the moment of the first gaze is the moment when he writes down 'I'. This 'I' on the page is like the mirror image, which introduces the eclipse that results in the representation of the 'self' as ruins.

Within this framework *Istanbul: Memories of a City* emerges as a Derridean self-portrait. While representing Orhan, the narrative also acknowledges the inherent presence of ruins in all attempts to represent. It does not aim to capture the 'self' in its entirety but rather celebrates the always already

fragmented constitution through ruins as a possibility for dissemination of meaning. The photographs, ruins, the shadowy grey colour of Istanbul and the feeling of *hüzün* are all indicators of the only possible way to represent as they reveal the impossibility of an original totality. These elements result in a narrative that far from mourning the loss of a totality celebrates the space that opens up in the eclipse that occurs. It is the self-portrait as ruins, that makes possible the story of the 'I' to emerge as the story of 'an-other' Orhan.

C. A Self-Portrait

Rather than offering Orhan a comforting space where he can feel 'at home' the city mirrors Orhan's sense of homelessness. Both the rich and modern neighbourhood of Nişantaşı and the poor back streets of Eyüp and Balat filled with ruins are unable to provide Orhan with a sense of belonging: 'I've never wholly belonged to this city, and maybe that's been the problem all along.' (Pamuk, 2006: 288) He thus remains in-between without necessarily belonging anywhere in the city where he has spent all his life.

Orhan, however, is not alone in his experience, as it appears to be the general opinion that the inhabitants of Istanbul share:

Even when I was a child, when the city was at its most run-down, Istanbul's own residents felt like outsiders half the time. Depending in how they were looking at it, they felt it was either too Eastern or too Western and the resulting uneasiness made them worry they didn't quite belong. (Pamuk, 2006: 233)

In his attempt to overcome this sense of uneasiness Orhan tries to find alternative ways, which would allow him to perceive the city in an orderly fashion. The apparent incompatibility that governs the city compels Orhan to look for a distinct perspective from which to experience it. The two principal activities that Orhan resorts to in this process are reading and painting.

He does not only read works of fiction, Western travellers' accounts of Istanbul or articles from *The Istanbul Encyclopedia* but the city itself becomes a text waiting to be read. The reading process, however, rather than unravelling an inherent meaning that the words carry, underline their material presence as

signifiers. Letters that Orhan sees around the city ‘did not convey meaning or even tell a story: they just made sounds.’ (Pamuk, 2006: 117) The illegibility of the text that the city offers echoes the shift from the Arabic script to the Latin alphabet, that was part of the modernizing reforms in Turkey. The changing of the alphabet, while aiming to create a Westernized and modern culture, obliterated the reading of all writing dating from the Ottoman era.

In *Istanbul: Memories of a City* the words acquire a more material existence through their illegibility. They do not appear as vehicles of a predetermined signified but manifest their existence as *signifier*.

Sometimes the letters arranged themselves in such strange ways that I was taken back to the magical days when I was first learning the alphabet. The decree on some of the cement pavements around the Governor’s Mansion in Nişantaşı, three minutes away from our house, was one of them. When I was walking with my mother and my brother from Nişantaşı towards Taksim or Beyoğlu, we’d play a sort of hopscotch on the empty pavement squares between the letters and read them in the order we saw them: ESAELP GNITTIPS ON⁸⁴ (Pamuk, 2006: 118)

The backward reading prevents an immediate communication of the meaning that the inscription conveys. Instead it appears as random letters placed next to one another. The reproduction of this inscription in the narrative establishes a parallel between the text and the images as it mimics the effect that the photographs have. Because of its illegibility the inscription does not appear as the symbol of a predetermined meaning but rather is assigned meaning to by Orhan. The illegibility of the written sign shows how regardless of the medium used all signs far from conveying a predetermined, inherent meaning gain their significance by coming into contact with the viewer/reader. It is Orhan’s

⁸⁴ ‘No spitting please’ written backwards. The backward motion echoes the Arabic script that the Turkish language used until 1928 when Kemal Atatürk replaced it with the Latin alphabet. The estrangement effect that this structural change have resulted in is mimicked with the backward written inscription that stands as a visual signifier.

representation of the letters in a reversed order in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* that assigns them with meanings, which will be further displaced with the encounter with the reader.

Later on during his high school years Orhan continues his reading of the city, yet the text that the city offers far from offering a transparent link to Istanbul further underlines its opaqueness.

all these give me to know that the rest of the city is as confused and unhappy as I am, that I need to return to a dark corner, to my little room before the noises and signs pull me under.

AKBANKMORNINGDONERSHOPFABRICGUARANTEEDRINKI
THEREDAILYSOAPSIDEALTIMEFORJEWELSNURIBAYARLA
WYERPAYINSTALMENTS⁸⁵

So in the end I'll escape the terrorising crowds, the endless chaos, and the noonday sun that brings every ugly thing in the city into relief, but if I'm already tired and depressed, the reading machine inside my head will remember every sign from every street and repeat them run together like a Turkish lament. (Pamuk, 2006: 287)

The street signs of the city become a text, one, however, that translates Orhan's turmoil into language. The passage at first sight appears as random letters placed side by side but at a closer look one can make out the words that these letters are part of. Nonetheless the irrelevance of these words to one another displays how neither the city nor the text it offers contains an inherent authentic meaning that is waiting to be discovered. The signs of the city are assigned meaning to by Orhan who experiences them as a reflection of his own turmoil. The letters of the city are similar to the ruins in the sense that they do not refer to a prior unified meaning that lies inherent but rather emerge as the always already fragmented definition of city. Orhan creates his own narrative of the city by combining the letters as he wishes thus assigning them with significance.

⁸⁵ Akbank, morning, doner, shop, fabric, guarantee, drink, it, here, daily, soaps, ideal, time, for, jewels, nuri, bayar, lawyer, pay, installments.

The words found in the city do not amount to a totalizing originary meaning of the city, but it is the text that Orhan creates with them that produces *his* Istanbul. Orhan's text *is* the definition of the city since '*il n'y a pas de hors-texte*' (Derrida, 1997: 158). The text that Orhan creates by bringing together random words, does not strive to capture the essential and inherent meaning of the city of Istanbul, instead it becomes a definition of the city as Orhan experiences it. Orhan's text re-creates the city as a pastiche of random words.

In addition to the text, Orhan also uses painting in his representations of the city. Soon after he starts painting he realizes that his style is largely an imitation of the French artist Maurice Utrillo (1883-1955) who is famous for his depictions of the streets of Paris. His imitation of Utrillo's paintings, while enabling Orhan to create beautiful paintings, allows him to become his 'self'. Painting Istanbul in imitation of Utrillo displays how Orhan can only be 'what he is' only by being 'an-other'.

I could not fend off that deepening melancholy that spread like a stain: the almost-but-not-quite shameful truth was that I could paint only when I thought I was someone else. I'd imitated a style, I'd imitated (though without ever using that word) *an artist with his own unique vision and way of painting*. And not without profit, *for if I had somehow become someone else, I, too, now had 'my' own style and identity*. I would take a faint pride in this version. This was my first intimation of the thing that would nag at me in later years, the self-contradiction – a Westerner would call it a paradox – that *we only acquire our own identity by imitating others*. (Pamuk, 2006: 244, *my emphasis*)

Painting like Utrillo provides Orhan with one of the various representations of his 'self'; it is one of the multiple mirror images that he sees reflected in the mirror. In a Lacanian framework Orhan would need to identify with this mirror image in order to obtain a unified and authentic definition of his 'self'. For Pamuk, however, imitating Utrillo is one of the many mirror images

available; his identification with him does not aim to reach an ultimate definition but rather enables him to be ‘what he is’ by becoming ‘an-other’.

The imitation of the ‘other’ far from emerging as an obstacle to a unique personal style becomes the only condition that makes it possible. Sibel Irzik reviews the question of imitation within the broader framework of the East/West opposition and states that *Istanbul: Memories of a City* far from condemning it transforms it into a resource:

The deconstruction of uniqueness is also the process by which the novel clears Istanbul of the charge of inauthenticity. The problem of Westernization as imitation is contained, if not resolved, by the repeated demonstrations of the imitated nature of every identity. Istanbul is no different from any other city as a place where the people cannot be themselves. The division between the Eastern heritage and Western influence thus becomes a resource rather than a liability, generating further possibilities of textual stratifications, proliferations of mystery, and coincidences of details. (Irizik, 2006: 734)

Imitation does not connote the belated Turkish experience of modernity, nor does it refer to a definition of identity that is secondary and derivative as opposed to an authentic original. Imitation as portrayed in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* is the only possible definition of the ‘self’. Imitating Utrillo provides Orhan with one of the multiple mirror images that he sees in the mirror, that allow him to define his ‘self’ as a perpetual displacement without ever reaching closure.

The multiplicity of reflections reverberates in relation with the different perspectives from which Orhan views the city. In the same way that he can be ‘an-other’ Orhan he can also experience the city from an ‘insider’s’ as well as an ‘outsider’s’ point of view. The multiplicity of the reflections that he sees in the mirror, while calling into question the existence of an originary totality that constitutes his ‘self’, enables him to remain in the shadowy zone in between, creating various Orhans that define his ‘self’ as difference and deferral. The

meaning of his 'self' thus remains in the ambivalent space that is created by this perpetual displacement without ever reaching prior or final definition.

The representation of the 'self' as 'an-other' becomes explicit in the final chapter of the narrative entitled 'A Conversation With my Mother: Patience, Caution and Art'. It describes one of the fights that Orhan has with his mother during the days when he is expressing his desire to drop out of his studies in architecture. Taking into account the low esteem that the arts and the artist receive in the Turkish society, his mother is trying to convince Orhan to obtain his degree before deciding on a career in painting. Orhan, however, who has lost interest in painting long ago, declares rather unexpectedly his new calling as a writer: 'I'm going to be a writer' (Pamuk, 2006: 333).

While the English translation conveys the surprise effect generated by this closing sentence of the narrative, it fails to represent the unusual sentence structure that is evident in the Turkish original. In the conventional sentence structure of the Turkish language the components are organized in the following manner: subject-object-verb. The subject and the object may replace one another depending on the emphasis. The structure of the final sentence of *Istanbul: Memories of a City*, however, fits neither versions and appears as object-verb-subject: 'Yazar olacağım ben'.⁸⁶ As a result the final word of *Istanbul: Memories of a City* in the Turkish original appears as 'I' [ben]. This ending rather than providing a final definition of Orhan's identity as closure, displays how he can only be 'what he is' through this 'I' that represents him in language.

The only way to be 'I' for Orhan is by writing; it is his representations in language that make him 'what he is'. Only by writing 'I' he can represent him

⁸⁶ A literal translation of 'Yazar olacağım ben' would be: 'Writer will be I'. *Yazar* 'writer', *olacağım*, 'I will be', *ben*, 'I'.

'self' as 'an-other'. Writing, here does not merely connote a profession but refers to the process of creating stories that allow representations of the 'self'. Similar to the Venetian, Hoja, the narrators of *My Name is Red*, Orhan too defines his identity through the stories that he creates where he can represent his 'self' as 'an-other' 'I'.

V. Conclusion

The initial line of investigation for this thesis is set by the question that the Hoja of *The White Castle* asks: ‘Why am I what I am?’ Using textual analysis and the theoretical framework provided by the writings of Jacques Derrida as the primary method of enquiry, in this thesis I studied how the three texts of Orhan Pamuk engage with this question that is aimed to provide a definition of identity.

Within the framework of this thesis and the works of Orhan Pamuk the definition of identity is not limited to an individual or national identity but connects with a variety of concepts that have conventionally figured in metaphysical contrasting pairs such as original/copy, same/different, word/image, history/fiction. Pamuk does not aim to reverse these hierarchies so that copy gains privilege over original or multiplicity is idealized over singularity. Nor does he suggest that these categories are interchangeable so that the other can replace the self or that the image can take the place of the word. What he is doing, instead, is to problematize the definition of these categories as representations of an originary and ideal meaning. For Pamuk the definition of identity, rather than aiming to reach closure, is made possible as displacement.

Following Derrida, Pamuk calls into question the definition of meaning as presence. The metaphysics of presence that is based on the assumption of an originary and inherent meaning is problematic for Pamuk. For a sign to operate, it both needs to be repeatable and differentiated from other signs. Thus even to determine a metaphysical definition of presence, signs are required. The temporal and spatial gap that emerges in the process of representation, rather than ensuring an originary and essential meaning, introduces *différance* through deferral and difference. For Pamuk it is the possibilities that emerge in this movement of

difference and deferral that enable meaning. Without aiming to reach a conclusive and comprehensive definition of meaning as either presence or absence, Pamuk proposes an ambivalent definition as displacement. The representation of meaning for Pamuk is possible only through the splitting that takes place within the sign resulting in multiple representations that enable difference and deferral. According to Pamuk, whether it is the 'self', the 'work of art', the 'city' or 'history', no definition is essential but is only made possible through different representations. Representation, for Pamuk, is not the repetition of the same but is a process of re-invention where meaning becomes possible as dissemination.

The immediate reverberations of this perspective are observed on the self/other binary which occupies a central role in Pamuk's oeuvre. In this study I argued that Pamuk, using the metaphysical binary as a starting point gradually displays the invalidity of these categories, as the definition of each is only possible as *différance*. Following the recurrent use of the mirror that invites a parallel with the Lacanian mirror stage, I analysed the role of identification in the definition of the 'self'. According to Lacan, the definition of the 'self' is only possible through identification with the unique mirror image that represents an ideal and complete selfhood. The mirror image thus emerges as the originary source of an essential definition of the 'self' that can only be attained through identification. Pamuk introduces a similar imagery with the recurrent use of the mirror, but unlike Lacan, he suggests multiple mirror images. The mirror image of the 'self' is not defined with an ideal originary image that symbolises an ideal state of unity but is always already multiple. Consequently identification for Pamuk does not involve striving for total correspondence with a fantasy of originary meaning instead it is a perpetual movement of displacement where

meaning can only be generated as dissemination. The definition of the 'self' is not determined by its identification with the image of an ideal 'other' but is only possible through its different representations as 'an-other'. Identification for Pamuk is the ambiguous space that emerges with the possibilities of representation; identification does not offer closure but enables meaning by perpetuating difference and deferral through representation.

On the broader context of Turkish identity I argued that for Pamuk the failed attempts at identification have predominated the definition of a Turkish 'self'. Both attempts to determine a unique, ideal mirror image either using the Ottoman heritage or the Western experience of modernity have condemned the definition of Turkish identity within the boundaries of the self/other dichotomy. Since full identification with the ideal fantasy set by either 'other' is impossible to attain, the Turkish definition of the 'self' has been condemned to remain as derivative and lacking. With the multiple mirror images, Pamuk not only calls into question the definition of a unique mirror image as the source of an ideal meaning but also undermines the hierarchical positioning of the 'self' and the 'other'. He displays how the definition of the Turkish 'self' is neither a prior unity – exemplified by the Ottoman past – that was disrupted with the foundation of the Republic and the reforms, nor a lacking entity – exemplified by the belated experience of modernity – that needs to be completed through identification with the West. The only possible definition of the Turkish 'self' is obtained through a process of displacement, which far from leading to closure, results in ambivalence. For Pamuk, the definition of Turkish identity, as is the case with all identities, does not possess an inherent and essential meaning that can be obtained

through identification, but can only be reached through its different representations that enable production of meaning as difference and deferral.

For Pamuk memory plays an important part in the construction of the 'self' and he therefore addresses its implications on the definition of identity. For him memory is not an archive that contains a predetermined and essential meaning. Consequently remembering does not entail an exact reproduction of the same but rather is a process of repetition that inevitably contains the possibility of fiction. Similar to the definition of the 'self', memory too, is always already constituted of various fragments that with each representation are put together in a different form, resulting in its re-invention as 'an-other'. Accordingly the definition of history in juxtaposition with the fictional is problematized. History for Pamuk is not an all-encompassing narrative with a predetermined definition. Similar to memory, history too is created with the bringing together of different fragments in order to obtain a representation. The always already fragmented constitution of history is made evident with each representation that re-invents it as 'an-other'. Its representations through difference and deferral offer a definition of history that is inextricably related to the possibility of fiction.

In the three books that are analysed in this thesis I studied the recurrent strategies that support this theoretical framework. As an initial remark it is important to note that the scope of Pamuk's enquiry can also be detected in the structure of his narratives. The different diegetic levels, the organization of the chapters as well as the variety of narrating voices all indicate a narrative that, far from aiming to offer a totalising perspective, is made of multiple fragments. Not particularly keen on causality or chronology, Pamuk's narratives present multiple

fragments as independent entities that represent the narrative by re-inventing it as ‘an-other’.

In *The White Castle* the different diegetic levels of the narrative indicate a fragmentation that contributes to the ambivalence that is created within the intra-diegetic level. The different narrators of each diegetic level mimic the fragmented definition of the ‘self’ that the narrative outlines. Accordingly not only the identity of the ‘self’ but also the identity of the text is defined through the multiple fragments that far from providing a totalizing perspective enable its definition as difference and deferral. The fragmented definition of the narrative also reverberates in the individual stories that the Venetian and Hoja create using their childhood memories. These personal histories while making explicit the possibility of fiction also indicate their accidental composition. The stories that define ‘what they are’ are not narratives with a predetermined order and content but are composed of fragments that are put together in order to obtain a pleasant story. Their life stories thus emerge as one of the many possible versions that could be created with the different fragments.

The individual chapters of *My Name is Red* where different characters are narrators provide a similar fragmented outlook. The individual voices of the narrators as well as the independent stories they recount in each chapter underline the fragmented constitution of the narrative. Similarly *Istanbul: Memories of a City* is composed with individual chapters, which can all be read independently. Not only the text but also the images included in the narrative refrain from offering a landscape view of both the city and Orhan, instead providing individual fragments. In line with the multiple mirror images that Pamuk uses to define the ‘self’, this fragmentation does not imply a previous unity that was disintegrated

nor does it aim to create an eventual totalizing unity. Both the text and the 'self' are always already composed of multiple fragments, which far from aiming to reach a unifying closure enable production of meaning through ambivalence.

Additionally the index and the photographs placed within the narrative contribute to a fragmented definition of *Istanbul: Memories of a City*. The index allows the reader to create his/her own narrative without necessarily following the order of the chapters. The index suggests that the organization of the narrative is one of the many possible narratives that could be created. The photographs contribute to this fragmentation both in form and content; the images never show a general landscape view of the city, instead focusing on the small back streets. The photographs placed within the text disrupt paragraphs, sentences and even words, thus preventing a linear reading experience.

Memory, one of the recurrent themes in the three books, despite its different representations, operates in a similar fashion. While in *The White Castle* and *My Name is Red* memory is represented on a broader framework with the historical settings, in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* it gains a more personal quality in relation with Orhan's childhood anecdotes. *The White Castle's* historical setting displays how for Pamuk representation of history does not entail a realistic and truthful account of past events but is a re-invention of its always already fragmented constitution. The inevitable possibility of fiction in all attempts to represent is also mimicked in the personal histories of the Venetian and Hoja whose life stories are created with a mixture of childhood memories, falsehoods and dreams. Similarly the historical setting of *My Name is Red* indicates how Pamuk's interest in history does not entail a nostalgic gaze that aims to restore an originary meaning but rather is defined through its various representations that

assign it distinct meanings. The link between representation and memory is portrayed through the traditional techniques of the miniature artists who in order to obliterate formal accuracy and the gaze of the artist, depict the images that they have memorized during years of training. The juxtaposition of miniature painting with Western tradition of painting allows Pamuk to display how all representation inevitably involves memory in the sense that even the representation of the present forms, as is the case in the Venetian portraits, involves difference and deferral. Furthermore Pamuk calls into question the miniaturists' practice by displaying the impossibility of repeating the same. According to the miniaturists, repetition prevents the production of meaning by reproducing the same, Pamuk, on the other hand, contends that repetition is only possible as representation that inevitably produces meaning as difference and deferral. Pamuk highlights how the repetition process, as the miniaturists use it, enables production of new meaning by introducing the possibility of fiction. It is the possibility of fiction that enables the creation of *Istanbul: Memories of a City* as the recollection of memories. Problematizing the history/fiction dichotomy Pamuk contends that recollection is never possible as the repetition of the same but always entails the possibility of fiction, as it is a process of representation that differs and defers.

The face is another recurrent element in the three books that allows an important line of enquiry. In *The White Castle* the implied similarity between the Venetian and Hoja enables Pamuk to recreate a mirror scene, which echoes in relation with the metaphysical binaries that include self/other, East/West and master/slave. The extent of the similarity gradually becomes more ambiguous, thus allowing Pamuk to undermine its role in determining a singular definition of identity. In *My Name is Red* the face operates as a metaphor for the form and is

used to address its link to the production of meaning. The juxtaposition between portrait painting and miniature painting through their approach to formal accuracy is undermined when Enishte Effendi sees a portrait painting. Enishte Effendi's reaction to the portrait painting, while indicating the absence of an inherent originary meaning, displays the indispensable role of forms in the production of meaning. While in *The White Castle* and *My Name is Red* the accurate representation of facial features is absent, in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* Pamuk adopts a distinct approach by presenting various photographs that show the face. The representations of Orhan's face in the photographs provide a definition of his identity by re-inventing him as 'an-other'.

Similar to the face, the proper name and the signature are significant elements of Pamuk's oeuvre. Not only the presence of the name but also its absence operates as an important line of enquiry. In *The White Castle* the Venetian and Hoja are deprived of their names, which contributes to the confusion regarding the identity of the narrator. Pamuk, however, does not define the proper name as the provider of an individual and authentic definition of the 'self' but rather, following Derrida, underlines how the proper name is only possible through repetition. It is with repetition that the possibility of fiction emerges, obliterating the proper name's claim to an originary and authentic definition of the 'self'. The name Abdullah Effendi illustrates Pamuk's definition of the proper name as while establishing a link with Tanpinar's story it also highlights the role of repetition as the precondition that makes name possible.

My Name is Red addresses the proper name primarily in relation with the signature of the artist. Within the tradition of miniature painting the proper name and the signature are equated with an originary and essential definition of the

‘self’. Since miniature painting is striving to achieve the ideal meaning that is independent of forms it considers all kinds of interference as a possible threat to the ideal definition of the world. Consequently the signature is not allowed because it would introduce the presence of the artist in the painting, altering the prevailing order. Pamuk, however, highlights the possibility of fiction that emerges with the repetition of signature and thus undermines its equation with a prior and originary definition of the ‘self’. In accordance with this approach, Pamuk names his characters after himself and his family members. The repeated names give life to new characters in the narratives, displaying the inevitable presence of fiction in all repetition.

The character of Orhan is an essential leitmotif of Pamuk’s narratives. Not surprisingly Orhan always emerges as the ‘writer’; this metafictional device operates in line with Pamuk’s definition of identity. The character of ‘Orhan the writer’ offers a definition of Pamuk’s identity by showing that it is the different representations created through writing that he can be ‘what he is’. ‘Orhan the writer’ makes Pamuk ‘what he is’ by enabling the multiple representations of his ‘self’ through the different characters in his novels. Similar to the storyteller of *My Name is Red*, whose identity was only revealed through the different stories he told as ‘an-other’, ‘Orhan the writer’ too becomes ‘what he is’ by telling stories that allow him to be ‘an-other’. Writing as representation allows the definition of meaning through a constant displacement, where no ultimate closure can be obtained.

The recurrent appearance of ‘Orhan the writer’ far from referring to an originary and authentic definition of identity, indicates the impossibility of repetition as the reproduction of the same. In each narrative the character of

‘Orhan the writer’ appears as ‘an-other’ thus highlighting the possibility of fiction in each repetition. Each time ‘Orhan the writer’ appears he is re-invented as ‘an-other’ thus resulting in the definition of his identity as difference and deferral. This displacement is further developed with the stories that he creates where he appears yet as ‘an-other’.

The repeated appearance of ‘Orhan the writer’ also establishes a parallel with the mirror images that play a significant role in Pamuk’s oeuvre. The mirror for Pamuk is the space where the definition of identity becomes possible as displacement. While for Lacan identification with the fantasy of the ideal mirror image is indispensable for the constitution of the ‘self’, Pamuk proposes a distinct definition of identification with the multiple mirror images.

For Pamuk, the mirror image is not one but many; the various representations of the ‘self’ as ‘an-other’ constitute the different mirror images, undermining the definition of identification as the total correspondence with a singular ideal image. As a result of the multiplicity of images that appear in Pamuk’s mirror, identification is no longer a linear process that leads to an eventual definition of identity as closure, but is a constant movement, a perpetual displacement, amongst the various representations. Because as Derrida affirms ‘an identity is never given, received, or attained; only the interminable and indefinitely phantasmic process of identification endures. (Derrida, 1998a: 28)

The reading suggested in this thesis far from aiming to unravel a conclusive originary definition of Pamuk’s texts intends to offer ‘an-other’ reading. In the light of the issues addressed in this study further studies may be conducted on Pamuk’s work with a focus on the different implications of identity. One such area of interest is created regarding the representation of gender roles.

An analysis on the representation of women in the predominantly male world of Pamuk's novels would result in an interesting and valuable study. Taking into account the recurrent emergence of family ties, a further line of enquiry may be developed to investigate the reverberations of identities constructed within the family. Pamuk's focus on the parent/child relations as well as the fraternal rivalry would generate new and challenging questions that would cover a variety of critical frame of reference. Additionally a linguistic analysis of Pamuk's work would contribute to discussions initiated in this thesis regarding the possibilities of representation. Furthermore a comparative perspective that focuses on the different translations of Pamuk's novels would prove valuable in developing alternative lines of enquiry.

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